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MARK Bosnich looks set to sign for Manchester United.

This week he talks about his future as he looks almost certain to be back in his native country in July.

Should Bosnich not sign for United then he will line up

against them in a two game series due to take place in Sydney and Melbourne.

Meanwhile Mark Schwarzer has declared himself unavailable for Australia – with the ASF likely to step in and take action.



WOLVES coach Nick Theodorakopoulos has joined the ASF coaching staff – at least for the trip to Fiji with the Joeys.

Tipped to be on the verge of leaving Wollongong City the lure of international foot-

ball may yet be strong enough to keep the talented young NSL coach at home.

Rumours abound in Wollongong that he is on his way to Greece while stories of player unrest at the Wolves are also commonplace.

AUSSIE KEEPERS

AUSSIE COACHES

LES HITS BACK

by Bruce Campbell

NATIONAL youth coach Les Scheinflug will depart this week for Fiji where the Australian Under 17 team will take part in the Oceania qualification series for this year's Under 17 World Cup to be held in New Zealand.

But during a practice session last week Scheinflug took time off to hit back at his critics; those who are clearly calling for his head.

"Consider my critics and ask the question, what have they done for soccer in Australia and how well do they know the game really?" he told *Inside Soccer's* Stuart Jones (see full interview on pages 24 and 25).

"If they can answer they have done a lot and are knowledgeable in their critiques then you can take their opinions on board."

Scheinflug is the target of a media campaign to have him removed with one of his main protagonists being the Sydney Morning Herald's Michael Cockerill.

Cockerill and Scheinflug have not seen eye to eye for some years now but the row has spilled over with others taking sides.

The national youth coach still has some time to run on his present contract and has been a mainstay of the ASF staff coaching system since 1973 when he was assistant coach to Rale Rasic.

Scheinflug is also a former Socceroo captain and made his Australian debut over three decades ago.

But his lifetime of devotion and service to our game has proven to be no armour with another attack coming from SBS's Kyle Patterson during a Friday evening sports segment.

"I went there because I wanted to," says Scheinflug of the SBS show.

"I thought I owed the channel that has done so much for soccer in Australia at least that much.

"I went there to explain the reasons for Nigeria '99 but I felt I could not get them across.

"I thought what Kyle did was bad.

"Can you imagine any national coach getting the sort of grilling I got?"

Scheinflug is unlikely to be removed from his position.



Les Scheinflug: in an exclusive interview with *Inside Soccer's* Stuart Jones the national youth coach hits back at the media and his critics

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Zelic and Viduka in all star cast for World XI match

By Paul Millar

GLASGOW Celtic star Mark Viduka will lead Australia's attack against the FIFA World XI, but Socceroo coach Raul Blanco will rule out Paul Agostino when he names his squad this week.

Agostino is recovering from a knee operation and won't be fit for the June 12 game to officially open the Sydney 2000 Olympic centrepiece, Stadium Australia.

Agostino's team-mate at German club 1860 Munich, Ned Zelic, will be one of the first names penned by Blanco for the 18-man squad.

FIFA is expected to announce its squad at the end of the month with Zinedine Zidane heading an all-star cast likely to include Ryan Giggs, David Beckham, Ronaldo, Raul, Paolo Maldini and Davor Suker.

Blanco won't have the riches available to FIFA but will also draw his squad from around the globe.

Blanco must decide

whether to chance Glasgow Rangers defender Craig Moore, in doubt with medial ligament problems that will keep from the Ibrox club's push for the Scottish league championship.

Skipper Alex Tobin's inclusion is also a concern as he is still suffering the effects of a groin injury and looked far from his best on Sunday even though his goal gave Adelaide City a 1-0 victory over Sydney Olympic.

Aston Villa's Mark Bosnich will claim the number one jersey despite his foot injury with number two goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer having quit international soccer at least for now.

It could prove a blessing for the Socceroos as he let in six on the weekend as Middlesbrough went down 6-1 to Arsenal.

Blackburn Rover John Filan has been in top form this season and is likely to be named as Bosnich's back up.

Blanco said every overseas player he had contacted about playing in the game had responded

positively, meaning at-times-reluctant-Socceroo Harry Kewell will make the trip from Leeds.

Stan Lazaridis played an injury time role for West Ham as the improving Londoners beat Tottenham 2-1 on the weekend but he always lifts for Australia and is an almost certain starter.

Hajduk Split midfielder Josip Skoko has reportedly been offered the skipper's job at the Croatian club in a bid to keep him there but, if Blanco is looking to compose a team for the future, Skoko must be in it.

John Aloisi is the top Australian striker overseas, netting 21 times for Portsmouth and Coventry City this season, and will be a serious contender while South Melbourne's Goran Lozanovski has been in stunning form recently.

Organisers are expecting a sell-out crowd for the match and, even with the line-ups still unknown, 80,000 seats are accounted for with only 30,000 tickets left.



Ned Zelic: TSV's Aussie mega star is certain to be on the field against the FIFA World XI

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Man U tour: no time for experiments

FORMER Manchester United and England great Sir Bobby Charlton tonight warned the Socceroos to expect a full-strength United when the English giant tours in July.

Charlton, speaking on an international conference call from London, said it was a pre-season tour and the soccer club would take a full squad to Australia.

"The tour will be part of preparation for the new season and it will be most important for players competing for team positions," he said.

"It won't be time for any experiments and everyone will have to be on the tour."

Charlton was, however, not hopeful of Australia finding better opposition to improve its chances in the lead-up to qualifying rounds for the World Cup.

"There are so many competitive fixtures now



Sir Bobby Charlton

at international level and it's difficult for countries to find time for friendly matches," he said.

"Time is of an essence and there's less time to travel so far to places like Australia."

"The problem will continue but if there is a slot for touring, people will take it."

"In the past, the quality of football in Australia had not been good enough to entice top teams but it has been steadily improving over recent years."

Speaking of Manchester United he added: "We have a chance of winning three competitions and I'd be very pleased if we won one of them," he said.

"Winning three is something you dream about but don't really expect but United has a really strong squad and if it's ever going to be done, this would be the time."

The Socceroos don't normally play club sides but the attraction of facing one of the most famous clubs in the world was too big to pass up and SA pencilled in the drawcard match originally for the MCG on Friday July 16.

However, the AFL refused to rework its fixture list to accommodate the rival code.

Instead, the match against Manchester United was shifted to Thursday July 15.

AFL chief executive Wayne Jackson dug in

his heels over the fixture, saying Australian Rules was big business and was trying to build up its Friday night fixtures.

"If Manchester United is so keen to play what is a demonstration match, promoted by an entrepreneur who stands to make substantial money from it, then there's a lot of other days in the week it can be played," Jackson said.

Melbourne Major Events chief Ron Walker said Jackson made it very clear he did not want any competition for Australian Rules.

"They were somewhat bloody-minded in not cooperating to bring this international event to Melbourne but the MCG has given us the Thursday evening and despite the decision by Mr Jackson it will be an outstanding success," Walker said.

The tour by United is being run by entrepreneur

Rene Rivkin.

Rivkin has said the two match series against United will cost \$7 million to host.

The United squad named by Rivkin is: David Beckham, Henning Berg, Jesper Blomqvist, Wes Brown, Nicky Butt, Michael Clegg, Andy Cole, Jordi Cruyff, John Curtis, Ryan Giggs, Denis Irwin, Ronny Johnson, Roy Keane, David May, Gary Neville, Philip Neville, Erik Nevland, Paul Scholes, Teddy Sheringham, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Jaap Stam, Raimond Van der Gouw and Dwight Yorke.

Tickets go on sale Saturday May 1 through Ticketek (02) 9266 4806 in Sydney and Ticketmaster (136 122) in Melbourne.

Match dates: Melbourne, Thursday July 15, 1999 MCG; Sydney, Sunday July 18, 1999 Stadium Australia

Newcastle get new look for next season

by Bruce Campbell

NEWCASTLE fans will know the identity of the new owner of the Breakers sometime this week after the deal, which must rank as the most boring and drawn out affair in the 22-year-old history of the NSL, is finally concluded.

The bid by an undisclosed person chairman Bill Collins describes as 'not really an out-of-towner' had to survive a eleventh hour bid by a consortium fronted by former Soccer Australia chairman, David Hill. If the Hill bid had gone ahead then Breakers Stadium would have been used as a training ground by the Newcastle Knights rugby league team while the Breakers would have shared the use of the Knights home ground, Marathon Stadium.

Thankfully for soccer fans that deal has been apparently rejected. For the last five months speculation has raged over who the new owners would be but after an on-again off-again affair it seems that the saga is finally coming to an end.

The Marathon Stadium deal as proposed by David Hill

would only have seen one sport advantaged - rugby league, and thankfully for soccer this has not been accepted.

Newcastle Knights, saw the Hill scheme as a method to entice government funding under the guise of developing Marathon into a multi-sport stadium. But it is hard to see soccer moving out of Breakers Stadium which is an excellent ground and the development of which threw the Breakers into turmoil in the first place and resulted in them taking a one year sabbatical from the league.

Only two weeks ago Breakers Stadium failed to reach its reserve price in a public auction. The new owners of the Newcastle Breakers Soccer Club face a half million dollar bill as part of the conditions which allow them to compete in next season's Ericsson Cup.

\$250,000 is payable on the dot as a franchise fee and the other quarter million is by way of bank guarantee to secure the club's financial viability.

In recent seasons Adelaide Sharks, Sydney United, Collingwood Warriors and the Newcastle Breakers themselves have all been beset by

major financial problems which threatened the viability of the NSL.

Collingwood tried to pull out of the league before it was finished two seasons ago while Sydney United's financial woes saw an administrator appointed earlier this season. Although that is in the Sydney club's past now there was a genuine fear at the time that the club's record would have to be expunged if it did not complete its fixtures.

With the expected entry of Auckland Kings, and possibly Parramatta, as well as the change in ownership of of Carlton and Newcastle and maybe Adelaide Sharks Soccer Australia is set to reap a windfall of anything up to \$1.5million in franchise fees.

The possibility also exists of another consortium entering the league as it becomes increasingly unlikely that Gippsland will be able to present a workable budget for next season. Soccer Australia is likely to announce the teams for next season's Ericsson Cup in June with a 16 team format probable.

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Bosman scrutinised

By Steve Keating

PROPOSED changes to transfer regulations will not include allowing players or clubs to terminate contracts whenever they choose, FIFA said.

In light of the 1995 landmark Bosman ruling, soccer's world governing body admitted that it is looking into overhauling its transfer regulations in order to make them "EU compatible".

But any changes to the transfer system will not challenge the sanctity of contracts,

said FIFA, contradicting reports that the new regulations would allow players and clubs to terminate agreements whenever they wanted.

"We are looking at the transfer regulations as a whole," said FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren.

"One thing that is being closely looked at is what happens to a player at the end of his contract, which is the essence of the Bosman ruling."

Under the Bosman ruling, named after little-known Belgian footballer Jean-Marc Bosman, soccer players were

given the same freedom of movement as any other workers within the EU, meaning clubs could not charge a transfer fee once the contract had expired.

The ruling created chaos within the sport, ending nationality restrictions on clubs in domestic and international competition.

Ever since, FIFA and UEFA, European soccer's governing body, have struggled to find a compromise that would allow the sport to function within EU laws and regulations.

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Bruce Campbell

IT'S ONLY AN OPINION

IT'S nice to welcome Jason Marocchi and Damir Govorcina to the list of regular contributors at *Inside Soccer*. Recently photographer Carlos Furtado also joined our staff and his pictures have made a big impact on our pages.

In the next few weeks we will also start a full time News Editor at *Inside Soccer*, Australia's top selling soccer publication. The inclusion of regular supplements on regional areas has also commenced and they will become a significant part of this paper over the next few months.

Watch out also for bumper coverage of both the World XI match and the Manchester United tour. An expansion into New Zealand is also on the imminent horizon as we embrace really exciting times at this bastion of the world game.

I have been fortunate enough to have had a magnificent editorial team over the summer and we have seen many new names appear in commercial print for the first time including David Arnold, Alan Clark (and his legendary match reports) and Patrick Gallo-way. 'Veterans' like Stuart Jones, Nick Guoth, Fred Leggett and Bert van Bedaf have also made *Inside Soccer* home and although it certainly hasn't been one never ending success story it has been a pretty good season.

Thanks to everyone who has helped, including our regulars and overseas contributors as well as those hardy press service correspondents who are the unsung heroes of the game.

As we go for next season

UNLESS a bomb drops out of the sky then it very much looks as if at least 14 of the current NSL clubs will be back for the new term next season.

The only one which is doubtful is Adelaide Sharks, convulsing with all sorts of problems ranging from crowd apathy to bad management to financial misery.

The rest, despite the fact that Soccer Australia is currently reviewing the clubs' submissions, will be admitted.

You can take that as read, despite what has been written elsewhere.

And the reason is an obvious one – the game just cannot afford the legal bills which would go with cutting some of the drift wood loose.

But you can't blame the clubs

themselves, why should they give up the right to play at the highest level?

The real problem has been the lack of a genuine promotion and relegation system.

Never in the 22 year history of the league has a successful system been used – and the ones that have been used were changed ad nauseam.

Had promotion been successful then the less successful clubs would have died out from natural attrition instead of a statutory body imposing artificial regulations.

It isn't my place, nor my desire, to point the fingers at those clubs which are unlikely to be part of the set-up in five years time.

But I would make an impassioned plea for the NSL to intro-

duce a second division sooner rather than later so that the clubs which will likely die by the end of next season have an alternative.

The Soccer 21 document would indicate that life in the NSL will become an expensive proposition from season 2000 onwards.

The likelihood is that only six or seven of our current clubs will be able to cut it in the new league.

The box office success of Perth Glory and Northern Spirit has been staggering and it has really set a new benchmark for other clubs.

I can honestly only see, on current evidence, Adelaide City, South Melbourne and Marconi been definite starters.

I hope that Canberra Cosmos, Newcastle Breakers, Sydney Olympic and

Urawa friendly

ENOUGH is surely enough.

Maybe the NSL isn't the greatest competition in the world but it is the best we have.

Everybody concerned with the game here should be working hard to make it even better.

Maybe we can't stop the drain of Australian talent.

With the chance of making \$50,000 week overseas I would go too if wasn't too old and fat.

And we certainly can't stop our teams from taking part in FIFA organised tournaments.

I don't have any problems at all

you must be joking

with the Young Socceroos playing in Nigeria – even if it meant that most of our clubs lost players they have been encouraged for years to give a chance to.

But when it comes to meaningless friendlies in Japan with club sides then it is time to call a halt to it all.

Despite the fact that no official communique has come out of Paddington my mole tells me that the Olyroos are likely to play a friendly against Urawa on May 12.

That is a disgrace. Our Top 6 series is now under-

way and Australian fans deserve to get top value for their very hard earned dollars.

I couldn't give a stuff about the Olympics; already I am fed up to the back teeth of the over-commercialised rip-off which is being perpetrated on us.

It was bad enough when plans were announced to restrict access to my beloved Bondi Beach but this time things have gone too far.

Like everyone else I want to see Australia win Olympic gold but will it make any difference whether we play some stupid friendly or not?

Brisbane Strikers can make the adjustments that will be necessary for them to step up but they have problems to overcome first.

Of course, that is what separates the winners from the grinders and you would be confident that having come so far that they will make the next step forward as well.

But look back in history and it is evident that our game has not stabilised yet.

Only Adelaide City, Marconi and South Melbourne have been ever presents since 1977.

No-one would have ever guessed that St George, one of the great clubs in our history and a founder member of the league, would have bitten the dust.

Likewise, Sydney City.

But they did and the reason was a simple one – they couldn't attract big enough crowds to home matches.

Everywhere they went, except for Sydney, people wanted to see them but at the end of the day it is home crowds that count.

It is surely a hard lesson to be learned and time has not changed.

Surely we can at least get the Top 6 out of the way first?

Let us all just pretend for once that we really do think that the National Soccer League is a fair dinkum contest.

The promotion of it this season has been nothing short of pathetic.

We all know that there are financial reasons for that (thanks, Benny) but there are no reasons for taking our best young players away for a meaningless game in a meaningless country at a time when our clubs are fighting for their very future.

Socceroos

I AM writing to let you know that myself and many other soccer fans in Australia cannot wait until July 15.

Why? Because it is when the biggest, most spectacular soccer game ever to be played in Australia hits the MCG.

I happened to witness the Socceroo's devastating loss against Iran at the MCG and never have I felt so many emotions in one place.

The Socceroos v Manchester United will no doubt bring back some of these feelings for so many soccer fans only this time it is not on a path to World Cup.

Not only will this game bring together some of the best soccer players of today but it will definitely boost Victoria's sporting history.

Can you imagine 100,000 soccer fans coming together for one night to enjoy the best sport put on this earth?

I certainly can and I will be there in the best seat in the house – cheering for our beloved Socceroos.

Natalie Traralgon VIC (NICE sentiments Natalie).

The Manchester United side is certainly one of the best in recent years and it will be a pleasure to watch.

When United toured in 1967 their forward line was the incomparable trio of Best-Law-

Charlton.

I wonder what our readers think of modern day comparisons?

For my mind that forward line would have to rate as the best I have ever seen in the modern era, and Best was a genius.

But like you I will be cheering on the Socceroos at both matches. – Ed).

Let's Grow Up

THE AFL's refusal to reschedule an Australian Rules Football fixture from the night of Friday, July 16 to accommodate the Socceroos v Manchester United match at the MCG on that night should not surprise soccer fans.

It is tiresomely typical of the AFL's attitude to soccer.

Those with long memories would, I'm sure, be able to recall many similar attempts by the AFL and its supporters to stifle soccer in this country.

Here are just a few examples I can remember: - refusing in 1988 to allow Argentina's then world champion soccer team to be paraded before spectators at half time during an AFL club fixture.

Argentina were in Australia to contest the Bicentennial Gold Cup.

- making a rule a few years ago expressly forbidding the AFL's member clubs to devote any management time or funds to any venture in-

volving another football code.

This was in direct response to plans at the time by the Collingwood and Carlton AFL clubs to enter a team in the National Soccer League.

- The disgraceful attempted jettisoning of the Collingwood Warriors adventure by Collingwood AFL club half way through the 1996/97 NSL season when it became apparent that the AFL club would need to invest in the Warriors to see them through the season. - using its influence with the Queensland State Government to get its hands on \$40 million of taxpayer's money earmarked to upgrade Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium (a soccer venue) for the 2000 Olympic Games football tournament.

It is now to be spent on upgrading the Woolloomooloo Cricket Ground to host the tournament, before the ground reverts to use by Australian rules and cricket.

The moronic thing about the AFL's latest decision is that it will be a futile gesture.

The Man United v Socceroos fixture will most likely be a sell-out at the MCG even on its revised date of Thursday, 15 July.

All the AFL has achieved is to reveal itself to everyone as a mean-spirited, soccer-paranoid, organisation which is unable to live up to its professed swagger-

ing confidence about its own game.

Remember that this is an organisation which regularly advertises its code of football by mocking the skills of other codes.

In reality it seems that the AFL is so insecure about the merits and appeal of its game that it feels compelled to behave like a cornered rat whenever soccer threatens to raise its profile in this country.

I think that it is important for the soccer community to loudly say "enough is enough".

We should no longer chant the mantra "there is room for all sports in this country".

The AFL obviously doesn't agree.

Why keep turning the other cheek when the AFL simply goes about belting us on both sides of the head?

Let's grow up, accept that the AFL is determined to smother soccer and start dealing with this before it devotes itself to scuppering Australia's bid to host the 2010 World Cup.

Stevie Redbank Plains QLD (AND the inevitable will surely happen)

Northern Spirit have already made a mockery of North Sydney rugby league club and always outdraw the majority of NRL teams, Perth Glory are setting all sorts of new records out west, there are more soccer

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juniors playing the game in Victoria than Aussie Rules – now wasn't all that unthinkable just a few years ago.

When Manchester United come to Australia to play a game of league or rules then we might have a problem but in the meantime it is just a case of simple evolution.

The crowds and support for soccer in the '90s is incomparable to thirty, twenty or even just ten years ago.

An Aussie soccer club outdaring a rules game – now I'd like to see that. – Ed).

Semi-change destined for failure

IT'S that time of the year again when ethnic backed teams are once again talking about systematic change that will broaden their supporter base and entice new supporters to their games.

We are fooled to believe that new management and strategies will ensure packed terraces to their games in the coming season.

Well, I would like to remind these clubs once again that they are twenty years too late and their proposals are doomed to failure once again because some of the Australian soccer fraternity will never forget the alienation and unwelcomeness of the past twenty years.

The Australian soccer fraternity this season have once again spoken through the arrival of Northern Spirit that NEW clubs truly representative of all Australia for all Australians will only now be endorsed and successful.

Northern Spirit, the fledgling club from Sydney, has proven that Perth Glory was not just a one-off.

Ethnic clubs reluctant of change in the past who play in the colours of their ethnic mother country/teams with one ethnic supporter base are now destined for the scrap heap.

David Hill, the man who knew nothing about Oz soccer in particular but knew what was right

for the game in Australia, will long be remembered for the revolution of the game which is currently taking place.

The game, the competition, the players and more importantly the paying public will all be rewarded in the coming years with fresh, new innovative teams that are lining up for NSL status.

Ethnic clubs, don't ever say we never told you so.

William Costa Mosman NSW

(IT IS important that *Inside Soccer* provides a forum for discussion of all factions.

However, I would like to point out for the sake of accuracy that;

a) The most successful six clubs in the NSL this season are represented by 2 non-aligned clubs and 4 mono ethnic background clubs.

The clubs which make up the middle group of 5 are represented by 3 non-aligned clubs and 2 mono ethnic background clubs.

continued on Page 7

Schwarzer doesn't want to play Bosnich will give his best

Socceroo star Mark Bosnich has pledged to help Aston Villa fight for a place in Europe even though he is likely to join Manchester United next season.

Bosnich is reported to have agreed to sign with United next season in a £50,000 (\$A125,000) a week deal but has promised his loyalty to Villa in their forthcoming May 1 clash with the Premiership leader.

"I am still a Villa player and I will keep all my options open until the end of the season," he told the Daily Mirror.

"Then I will listen to all interested parties."

Bosnich is free to discuss terms with other clubs after the third week in May for a free transfer under the Bosman ruling and Manchester United are keen to secure him as a replacement for keeper Peter

Schmeichel.

"Certainly I want to emphasise that I am still a Villa player because I will be giving them everything in the remaining games and that includes the match with United," Bosnich said.

"I'm mindful that my club is still fighting for a European place and that has to be my priority at the moment.

"I don't want any suggestion or anyone pointing a finger at me when I play for my club against Manchester United."

The Villa keeper has just returned from a five-month absence following a shoulder injury.

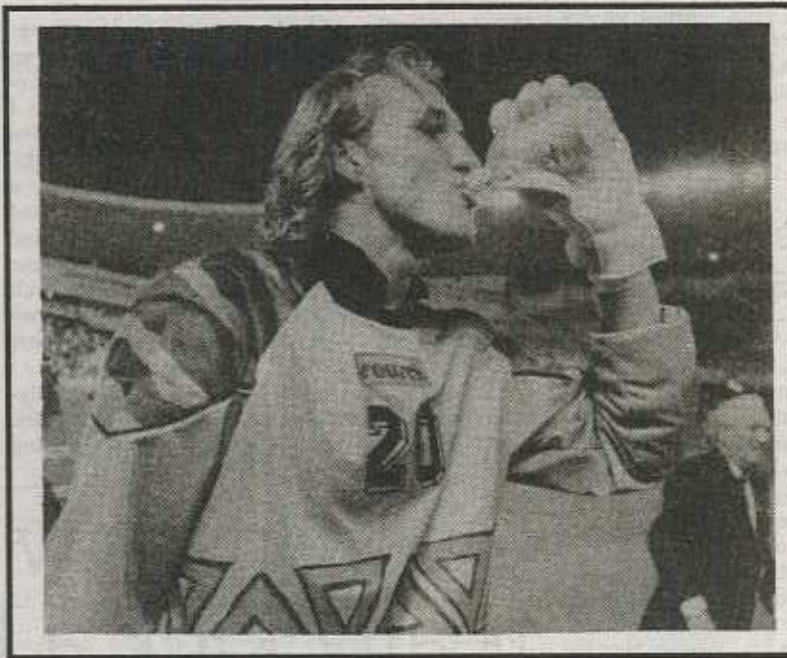
He was linked with a possible move to Italian Serie A giants Roma but he has always been United's first choice to replace keeper Peter Schmeichel.

And in other news concerning top Aussie keepers Middlesbrough's Mark Schwarzer has confirmed that he does not want to play for Australia next season.

The 26-year-old former Marconi keeper was involved in controversy during Terry Venables' reign as Socceroo coach when he slammed selections.

A recent trip to England by Marconi boss Tony Labbozzetta and Les Scheinflug was thought to have healed the obvious wound.

But Schwarzer has said he does not want to travel half way around the



world to act as deputy to Australia's No. 1 goalkeeper, Mark Bosnich.

"I have decided not to make myself available for Australia next season," he said.

"I don't want to miss premier league matches which I know I would not be first choice on the international circuit.

"Mark is Australia's No. 1 goalkeeper and if I travelled all over the

world and missed league games I would do my career more harm than good.

"I have played one full season in the Premier League and I want to build on that and prove I am the No. 1 for Australia and I can only do that playing against top-class opposition.

"Middlesbrough could qualify for Europe via the Intertoto Cup and that

would be tremendous for the players and the fans."

Schwarzer, the tallest player in the Premier League at 1.95 metres, has made five appearances for Australia, while Bosnich has played 17 times. And under current FIFA regulations Soccer Australia has the right to call him up, or see him suspended - despite his stated intentions.



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Corica Scores

STEVE Corica played a full game and scored in 13th minute while Kevin Muscat also played a full game in Wolverhampton Wanderers' 1-0 away win at Birmingham.

Corica notched up his first goal for Wolves since moving from Leicester City in February 1996; Wolves are currently in 6th position.

Robertson resumes training

OLYROO Mark Robertson has resumed training with Burnley after undergoing a hernia operation seven weeks ago, and should be back in full training within the next three weeks.

Robertson, who's contract runs out with Burnley at the end of this season is considering his options while he regains full fitness.

"This has been a very frustrating time for me, a nightmare really," he says.

"I couldn't believe I had to have the operation and while the club wanted me to hold off, in the end it got too sore, and I had my future to consider.

"Burnley have offered me another contract but I'm considering."

Tim misses out on Wembley winner's medal

"TO be fair, I'm taking things one thing at a time at the moment and trying not to get too excited," said Cahill.

"My mental preparation for this game (the Shield final) will have a big effect on how I play, because I've never played in front of the type of crowd they're predicting, 70,000.

"I think I'll have a hard night's sleep the night before Wembley, and the nerves will hit mainly

when we hit the change room and then walk up the tunnel for a huge reception, but as long as I go out with a positive attitude, I should be right.

The 19-year-old is a central midfielder and former Sydney United Youth and Super League player, who's been with Millwall for almost two years now, with another couple up his sleeve.

His Australian and Olyroo team-mate Lucas Neil would have been playing

in the final, but for an injury he picked up a few weeks ago, which leaves Cahill the sole Australian on the Wembley turf.

"Lucas is the more established player because he's been here three years but we're very close, we spend quite a lot of time together, playing golf and going out with the lads," said Cahill.

"There have been a lot of mixed emotions for both of us since Lucas got injured and knew he

wouldn't be playing this game.

"There are no words to express how he feels, or how we feel for him - he would have given an arm and a leg to play at Wembley, and it's a big loss for both of us.

"He'll be walking out with the lads though - he's played all of the games to get here, so he'll be walking out and sitting on the bench."

Cahill had the opportunity to sign with Notting-

We caught up with Tim Cahill 48 hours prior to his first appearance at Wembley Stadium in the recent Auto Windscreens Shield final, with the nerves just starting to tingle.

Unfortunately for the Aussie his side lost to Wigan with the winning goal coming in second half stoppage time.

ham Forest but decided on Millwall because of the London club's reputation as a feeder club to the bigger Premier League clubs.

Counted among the ex-Millwall boys are Teddy Sherringham (Manchester United), Chris Armstrong (Tottenham), and Mark Kennedy (Wimbledon), with Cahill hoping his regular first team appearances - 39 in total to be exact - will see him following in like

footsteps.

Despite what turned out to be a loss to Wigan in the final, it's only early days for this young Australian.

His very proud mum and dad were in the stands watching him, and they were there to help him get over his disappointment - but with evident talent and determination, there's the likelihood of many more future Wembley appearances for Tim Cahill.

Ollerenshaw shows league star how to really kick a ball

By Jeff Turnbull

ARL Melbourne Storm goalkicker Matt Geyer has turned to former Soccerro Scott Ollerenshaw for advice on his kicking after a couple of weeks of disappointing performances.

Two weeks ago against Auckland Geyer could manage just two from seven and against

Parramatta last week he kicked one from three.

Geyer and Storm back-up kicker Brett Kimmorley met with Ollerenshaw at Olympic Park and were shown how to kick a soccer ball and then transferred the style to the league's oval shaped ball.

Geyer said he had noticed himself trying to kick too hard in recent

games and accepted the help from Ollerenshaw, who was flown down from Sydney for the 90 minute lesson.

Ollerenshaw, who was member of the 1998 Seoul Olympics Olyroos team and played 18 times for Australia, was recruited by Storm chief John Ribot.

At the goalkicking session, the former Soc-

cerroo, now playing with Ryde City in the NSW State League, said Geyer was a good goalkicker "but imagine how much better he'd kick if his technique was better".

"I just spoke to him about the way soccer players strike the ball, striking through the ball, keep your upper body and head as still as possible, just small tips

but a few things he can work on," Ollerenshaw said.

"Working with Scott has helped me try to get more distance without losing my technique," said Geyer.

Former Sydney City legend Terry Smith and ex AIS head coach Ron Smith have also been instrumental in improving the kicking technique

of rugby league players in past seasons.

Ollerenshaw was contracted to Northern Spirit but after failing to overcome injury he tore up his contract by mutual consent.

He has made a comeback to playing in the NSW First Division with Ryde and is expected to be part of the Spirit campaign next season.

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Viduka Case settled out of court

THE long-running dispute between Celtic and Croatia Zagreb over the transfer of Mark Viduka to the Parkhead club was finally settled last week, without the adjudication of world body FIFA.

The two clubs, who had been at loggerheads since Viduka's switch from the

Croatian outfit to the Scottish champions in December, said in a joint statement that they have come to an amicable agreement.

Zagreb were outraged when Celtic, under former managing director Fergus McCann, withheld £1.5 million of the

transfer fee.

They received £900,000 and his first club Melbourne Knights got £600,000.

But Zagreb earlier last week insisted they were confident the matter would be settled amicably now that McCann has been replaced as Park-

head supremo by Allan MacDonald.

The Aussie striker walked out on the Bhoys just days after completing his transfer, citing stress-related illness and insisting he needed to spend Christmas back in his native country.

But Viduka has been in

pulsating form since he returned, scoring eight goals and helping boost Celtic's determined bid to land their first league and Scottish Cup double since 1988.

In a statement the clubs said: "We are pleased to announce that Celtic Football Club and Croa-

tia Zagreb have come to an amicable agreement concerning the 'Mark Viduka transfer dispute'.

"This agreement has been reached without the adjudication of FIFA.

"Normal amicable relations have now been reached between both parties."

Aurelio keeps a clean sheet in Japan

AURELIO Vidmar may have scored his first goal of the season in Sanfrecce Hiroshima's 4-1 (6-2 on aggregate) win over Vegalta Sendai at Hiroshima Stadium, but there was a lot more to come, when Vidmar was unexpectedly hauled into the goal-mouth.

"We had used all of our three subs, then the goalkeeper got sent off and initially one of our defenders went in goal for the penalty but they scored," he said.

"As the game was about to restart there was



a bit of commotion from the bench, the assistants were shouting for me to glove up, and I thought OK, no worries, we're up 4-1 at this stage.

"To tell the truth, I wasn't really happy about it initially because I've never played there before - just in training when we're mucking around and you're a goalkeeper for five seconds.

"But I really enjoyed myself, a few dribbles here, a few marks there, and I kept a clean sheet for my first one."

and the awesome Sydney Olympic.

I go to all the games (except when they clash).

I am a season ticket holder at Olympic and I have promoted that team by posting Olympic memorabilia up all over at my place of work, a TAFE College.

I know I can do more for them in a voluntary capacity or whatever.

Their home games at Belmore have been great. It's a real family atmosphere with lot's of small kiddies calling out names of the greats. Olympic's following is about 90% Greek (a phone call to the club office confirms this) and they don't have the resources to market properly.

Last year's first round match against Northern Spirit at North Sydney was pretty frightening for me.

The locals were yelling "go back to Europe" and kicking the backs of our legs. Most were English and intoxicated. Also, last year when Olympic were away at Edensor Park a section of Sydney United supporters seemed to spill out of their club after half-time, all intoxicated, made their way to our seating area and threw cans of beer at us and chanted "kill the Greeks".

concluded on page 8

Okon Back In Action

PAUL Okon was replaced 27 minutes into the second-half as Lazio lost 3-1 at home to Juventus.

Lazio holds a slender lead over AC Milan at the top-of-the-table.

After an extensive lay-off through injury and time on the bench, Okon was very happy to be back in the Lazio starting line-up.

"I was pretty happy with the way I played, but this was my first real game in a long time," he said.

"I was marking Filippo Inzaghi, and didn't feel I had too many difficulties in that role, because they were playing with only one real striker.

"As to whether I'll be seeing more Serie A on pitch action, well the only person that can answer that is the coach, but I hope that another opportunity comes between now and the end of the season.

"In any case, I'm still enjoying myself in Italy - this is where the soccer is."

Agostino Out

TSV Munich's Aussie Paul Agostino injured his left knee in a training collision with a team-mate, and will miss the rest of the season.

Bustos off the bench

IN HIS second first-grade appearance, Robert Bustos came off the bench in the 74th minute as Neuva Chicago won 2-0 away to Arsenal.

Bustos is a 20 year-old right-midfielder or stopper who has previously spent 6 months training with legendary Argentine Club, River Plate.

His former Clubs in Australia were Stanmore Hawks and Bankstown Lions.

Neuva Chicago play in Argentina's B Division Metropolitan Zone.

Harry to sign deal

HARRY Kewell is reportedly preparing to turn down a £10 million package deal from Italian Serie A team Juventus in favour of a new four-year contract with Leeds United.

The Daily Star said the Australian striker was wanted by Juventus as a replacement for Zinedine Zidane.

Leeds boss David O'Leary told the paper Kewell had confirmed he would commit himself to a long-term contract at Elland Road and would sign a new £20,000 a week deal this northern summer.

Your WRITE

continued from page 4

The clubs which make up the bottom group of 4 are represented by 2 non aligned clubs and 2 mono ethnic clubs.

You don't have to be prize winning journalist to work out that you have got your facts wrong.

Yes, Perth and Spirit are successful but is part of their success not due to the fact that they are winning? I am sure that every other club in the league would die for the kind of support that follows South Melbourne.

b) the only thing that David Hill will be remembered for, at least in the circles I move, is sending the ASF to the financial wall.

His reign turned a nice in-the-black figure into an economic disaster in which the national body is financially crippled.

c) You seem to believe that you are speaking for all fans, and that, I believe, is a big mistake.

This game is a multifacet, complex, racially and culturally influenced sport. Why can't we just leave it that way and let nature take its course?

If the so-called ethnic clubs aren't successful then they will surely die - is there any need to laugh at their funeral?

d) and finally, in the 22 years of the NSL (conference leagues also

listed singly) these clubs have won the league premiership;

Ethnically Aligned

APIA (1)

Brunswick Juventus (1)

Marconi (4)

Melbourne Knights (4)

St George (1)

South Melbourne (4)

Sydney City (6)

Sydney United (2)

West Adelaide (1)

Non Aligned

Wollongong City* (1)

* You might argue that

Wollongong, backed by the

Italian Fraternity Club, was an ethnic club,

at least in its formation

days when many of the

members came from the

Italian community but

you cannot argue with the

uncontestable facts; that the so-called ethnic

clubs have proven the

best over a 22 year period.

Like you, I, personally,

look forward to a day

when I hear only one

language at a football

ground in this country

but I would prefer that

we grow on the back of our proud heritage - not by dancing on its grave. - Ed)

Fair Play

YOUR recent editorial regarding women's soccer has just been brought to my attention and I must say that there is little evidence of the fair play which one would expect in a sporting pub-

lication.

Far from offering objective comment, you have used your position to promote the sort of discriminatory, chauvinistic drivel which has, in recent years, largely been silenced by an enormous growth in participation and the outstanding performance of state and national teams.

Why not do a comparison with the much larger, much longer established Soccer Australia who receive higher funding and whose Socceroos have only made one World Cup while the women have now qualified for two consecutive cups.

Yes, I do recognise the depth of the men's competition but pound for pound you would have to say that the women are more than holding their own.

Elaine Watson OAM Sunnybank Hills QLD (THIS letter has been substantially reduced. Without wasting space on it for iat comment I believe that the printed copy adequately represents Ms Watson's thoughts.

Comparisons to the ASF? - God knows how you would handle the sort of criticism that they receive from all sections of the media on an almost hourly basis.

In that comment piece I

wrote that the Matildas had failed in the Algarve Cup. They have, and they have failed at every other tournament also.

While they were a fledgling sport then everyone unhesitatingly gave them their backing but when women's soccer took the big step into a full time publicly funded programme the goal posts were immediately shifted.

Greg Brown is a great coach, as was his predecessor Tommy Sermanni, but he failed to get into the business end of the Algarve Cup just as Tommy failed in the previous World Cup.

The path of the Matildas into World Cup qualification is so easy that it barely rates a serious comment. With a team the is based at the AIS and is full time they should qualify but they should also do a lot more than just qualify.

But you have failed to recognise the most important point of the piece - the complaint that the AWSA does not treat the media with a fair hand. I, or a member of this business, have spoken to the three full time members of the AWSA based in Canberra about expanding our coverage.

It seems that they are happy to have full colour photographs, which they pay for, on sunny beaches rather than serious comment.

It would seem that the

With a continuing concern regarding the environment, it's great to see one company addressing an issue that our parks have been screaming out for.

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Mitchell moves closer to national job after United's success



By Ted Simmons

DAVID Mitchell took a further step toward the national team coaching position on Sunday when he proved the critics wrong by driving unfancied Sydney United to the National Soccer League premiership.

The 3-1 win over Adelaide Sharks at the United Sports Centre was a stirring example of a club overcoming repeated financial and player problems.

No one can claim more credit than Mitchell who has already been widely tipped as the person to take over the Socceroo reins when Soccer Australia finally settles on an appointment.

United won the minor premiership in the 1996-97 season only to lose the Grand Final 2-0 to

the Frank Farina-coached Brisbane Strikers.

In the ensuing months the club lost coach Branko Culina and nine key players including keeper Zeljko Kalac, defenders Tony Popovic and Robert Enes and striker Ante Milicic.

Former Socceroo Mitchell slotted into a coaching and playing role and proceeded to mould a successful team consisting of a few seniors, reserves and new signings.

His dedication carried the team to fourth place in the 97-98 season but they were eliminated by Marconi in the semi-finals and another exodus began.

The team led the Ericsson Cup for two-thirds of the season despite club financial problems, lack of player payments and adverse publicity.

Seven players including the briefly-returned Kalac, Paul

Bilokapic and Mark Rudan departed, leaving Mitchell once again to begin from scratch.

Mitchell this time relied on youth, promoting youngsters Joel Griffith, Mile Sterjovski and Danny Townsend and bringing in retired veteran keeper Mike Gibson.

By dint of persuasion, encouragement and leadership, Mitchell created a team which refused to surrender and now prepares for the chance to win its first national championship.

Sydney United, which was formed in 1958, has played 16 seasons in the National Soccer League.

It has been a semi-finalist 10 times, the last six years in succession and league premier three times with its only major success so far in the 1987 National League Cup.

Your WRITE

continued from page 7

After that scare I e-mailed SA and United but to date no reply. What I also do to promote the world game is incessantly write letters to all media channels asking for more coverage.

I urge your readers to continue to do the same. It can only increase your readership and market share in the end.

'The Australian' newspa-

per's coverage of the NSL is disappointingly very limited as is the 'Sydney Morning Herald's' coverage of NSW State League.

It's great what you're doing with 'Inside Soccer' but try and keep the advertising separate from editorial content. I cite your writer talking favourably about REAL directly above a REAL ad.

I also want to ask just who John Taylor is? Does he fly down from the moon every

week and write for the 'Daily Telegraph' pretending he has his finger on Soccer's pulse? His articles really leave me perplexed.

Alan Hunter is great value for my ABC pennies and OPTUS dollars. He's good for a laugh. A good commentator too. Michael Cockerill would have to be the best soccer writer/commentator in Australia.

Gavin Clarke
Bankstown NSW

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Knights making bold moves for future

by Damir Govorcin

MELBOURNE Knights are considering re-locating to Olympic Park next season to increase their chances of survival in the Ericsson Cup into the next millennium.

Poor crowds, lack of corporate support and substandard facilities at Somers Street has forced Knights' management to investigate playing their home matches closer to Melbourne's CBD.

It's a move which is sure to stir mixed emotions among the Knights' supporters, but the club's general manager Damian Phillips believes all avenues need to be explored if the Knights are to prosper into the 21st century.

"It's difficult to generate corporate support because of our location in the outer suburbs, so a



move to Olympic Park would open a few more doors for the club," offered Phillips.

"Olympic Park offers better facilities to attract corporate sponsors and our supporters can watch in greater comfort.

"As a club, we need to broaden our supporter base if we're to progress.

"It's not cut and dried

that we're moving to Olympic Park, but it's definitely an option."

The \$1 million dollar windfall the Knights received from Mark Viduka's transfer to Scot-

tish giants Celtic has helped eased the club's huge financial debt and ensured their survival in the Ericsson Cup for a year at least.

The Knights have had a poor season, failing to reach the play-offs but have no plans to open the purse strings to improve their squad next season.

"I know our supporters demand success, but our major priority is to alleviate our debts," asserted Phillips.

"If the money for Mark's transfer didn't

come we would be either playing in the Victorian Premier League next season or completely folded as a club.

"That's how serious it was and we still have a tough road ahead of us."

The Knights' playing ranks have been decimated in recent seasons and that trend looks set to continue with quality striker Tom Pondeljak expected to head over to Europe.

"Tom impressed during some trials he had in Belgium earlier this season and is keen to have another crack over there," said Phillips.

"It would be a shame to lose Tom, but we won't be standing in his way.

"It's a feather in the cap of this club that we can produce so many players who make the grade in Europe."

Forget the bonus: United is happy just to get paid

By Paul Millar

SYDNEY United players weren't holding their breath for a cash bonus when they wrapped up the league premiership against Adelaide Sharks on Sunday - they were happy just to get paid.

United leapfrogged South Melbourne with a victory at Edensor Park.

The players and United coach Dave Mitchell are still owed money and could be kept waiting even if they make the Grand Final.

"I'm confident I'll get my money," Mitchell told *Inside Soccer*.

"It might take three months - that remains to be seen - but I've come to an agreement with the club.

"I'd hate to think how



Sydney United coach David Mitchell

we'd be if we were near the bottom of the ladder."

Mitchell said it was a relief when United was placed in the hands of an administrator as it left the players to concentrate on the league.

"The boys have just stuck together, but we've also got some very good players here too," he said.

Now is the time for Blatsis and South

by David Arnold

SOUTH Melbourne have been a bit patchy of late, two losses in Sydney and less-than-convincing wins at home have sounded the alarm bells across the Ericsson Cup.

But could this be a cunning plan by South Melbourne, luring opponents into a false sense of security?

Souths have sewn up the double chance, all that remains was to sit back in front of the TV last weekend and watch two desperate teams fly into one another in Sydney.

Was that a purring sound coming from Postecoglou's throat?

"All the players are back, I think the Canberra game was the first time this season," he said.

Postecoglou is undisturbed by his team's performances of late, and points out their losses have been close.

"All our losses have come by the odd goal, I'm not worried."

There are no signs of stress nor sleepless nights in the changing rooms at South's Albert Park base, just a very confident team about to reclaim what some feel is rightly theirs.

A key with Souths this season is their ability to improvise with injury, jet set and discipline problems, and their excellence in playing on as if nothing happened.

The left flank has been patrolled by De Amicis



Con Blatsis: heading for Olympiakos in the off-season

and Coveny to great effect, the barnstorming runs of both egging the crowd and team-mates on.

Up front, Souths have played most of the season with Trimboli and Curjica, but John Anastasiadis comes on to great effect in the final third of the game, and both front men know a poor game could mean a visit to the

bench.

Robert Liparoti has come in for the injured Con Blatsis, and after a shaky start has settled down well.

Con Blatsis finally played the full 90 minutes against Canberra and the two week break should see any lingering niggles clear up, both for him and the squad.

Blatsis will trial at

Olympiakos in the off-season, but for him, now is the time to make his own contribution to South's title challenge.

The club did not bring in quality reinforcements in the off season, and has suffered with the loss of Tansel Baser and Billy Damianos to overseas clubs.

Instead they decided to stick with the existing

squad, and has it paid off.

But Postecoglou knows the club will have to bring in new players for next season.

"We are constantly looking and talking to players," he said.

The mooted World Club Championship in Brazil should be all the motivation South Melbourne needs.

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OTTIE ABONYI – AN AUSSIE LEGEND : Part 2

GREG STOCK continues his in-depth interview with OTTIE ABONYI, one of the fastest players to ever pull on a green and gold shirt – and one of the best.

Training on roof tops, winning cups and playing with legends



TO BE CONTINUED

GS: You would have played against Alex Ferguson in that game (Australia v Scotland 1967)?

AA: "Yes I sure did."

GS: Do you remember much about him in that game?

AA: "I was a bit over excited about the whole event."

"Lining up for the first time in the green and gold, hearing the national anthem and all that just overtakes everything."

"You know I didn't even know if my parents were in the stand or not."

"I mean they were, but emotionally it was tremendous."

"Again playing with guys that you sort of looked up to, people like Johnny Warren, Johnny Watkiss, Pat Hughes they were playing and here I was lining up next to these guys, something phenomenal."

GS: And Melbourne Hungaria won the Australia Cup that year too.

AA: "Yes that's right."

GS: You beat APIA in the final.

AA: "Yep 4-3. Geez you know more than I do (laughing)."

GS: I just did a bit of background.

AA: "Yeah we beat APIA 4-3."

GS: Was Joe Marston in the APIA side that day?

AA: "No, Joe had finished by then."

"I could not put my finger on what year he actually packed up playing for APIA, but he definitely wasn't in then."

GS: Whenever you talk about the APIA side in the sixties they all talk about Joe Marston.

AA: "Well that might have been early sixties. '61, '62 or whatever."

"There were guys (in APIA then) like Pat Hughes, Bottalico, Stan Ackerley, Cliff van Blerk, Giacometti there was an Argentinian guy Campagna, just basically those guys, but I mean that a team."

"And to beat them 4-3 was just great."

GS: You must have had some very handy teammates at Hungaria?

AA: "Well to be honest it was one of those years at Melbourne where this club I played for, Melbourne Hungaria of course, it was a fairly small club in comparison to clubs like say South Melbourne Hellas or Croatia or Juventus."

"But we just had one of those years where everything clicked at the same time by winning the Victorian state league and the Australia Cup in the same year was unexpected."

"It wasn't a brilliant side let me tell you I'll be quite honest, but everything went right for us in that particular year."

"Like in the year before we finished fourth, but in the years before that we never ever made fourth."

"From the time I can remember from the early sixties that club has never played in the semi-finals or four or whatever."

"We always finished eighth, ninth, tenth, seventh, whatever, but it was one of those years where it all clicked."

"It was tremendous."

"We had a good team but I'll be quite honest, and you have to be honest about this kind of thing, I thought there were better teams around in that particular year but we just happened to have a good year and we won it."

GS: There were no stand-out players in that side, like a Johnny Warren or a Watkiss?

AA: "No there was absolutely no one."

"Nobody had really even played for Victoria in those days in that particular club except myself and a guy called Henry Surma."

"He was a goalkeeper at that stage."

"He was also one of these juniors that came through the ranks and he was tremendous."

"I mean I am not knocking it, a couple of decent players Colin Myers and Frank Stofels, just to mention a few names."

"Alistair Scott, who of course went on to play for Victoria after that period for quite a number of years."

GS: So basically it was a team of no name players?

AA: "Yeah yeah"

GS: A good hardworking team?

AA: "Yeah, a good hardworking team."

"Because the year after we finished bloody eighth again (laughing) after winning everything in '67 we nearly got relegated."

"But it was a great club."

"A great club for young kids."

"They did bring on a lot of juniors over the years and they were always a club who were prepared to gamble with their juniors."

"Instead of buying which I can't remember them buying more than ten players in ten years whatever when I was there from as a kid."

"They were always bringing on young lads."

"It was a good nursery if you like."

GS: How did you find that trip considering Vietnam was in the middle of civil war?

AA: "Well it was, you're right it was smack bang in the middle of it."

"When you look back now we often talk about it, even now with Johnny Warren and guys like that."

"We just can't believe that it actually took place."

"We went in October of '67 and the tour was organised months and months before then but because of the war everybody thought it would be called off."

"I mean how crazy."

"We heard bombs go off in the background and things like that."

"I mean here we are in the middle of Saigon playing in a ten nation tournament."

"Just looking back on it it's so strange."

GS: They would never even think of doing that these days.

AA: "No, as I said I can't



situations yet we knew that the war was smack bang in the middle."

GS: So it must have been extremely difficult to concentrate on the football?

AA: "Well again, you

must remember that this particular team was a brand new team."

"I mean after the games against North Korea in the '66 qualifiers eighty

it was a brand new team (with) guys like Billy Vojtek, Tommy McColl, Alan Westwater and myself, apart from Johnny Warren, Johnny Watkiss, Ray Baartz in fact nobody really played for Australia before then."

GS: Was Manfred Schaefer around then?

AA: "Yeah but Manfred again it was his first time for Australia."

"In fact eighty percent of the team was the first time for Australia so they could have dropped a bloody bomb right next to the hotel and it wouldn't have bothered us."

"Because that was the first time for Australia, you know what I mean."

"That's why we weren't too concerned about anything else but to play those games and try and do our very best."

"Which we did and we won ten out of ten games and you can't ask for more than that."

GS: It would have been an interesting introduction to the Socceroos?

AA: "Yeah, and that team virtually stayed together right up to the seventies."

GS: You also went on the 1970 Asian tour which included Vietnam. Was that the same experience with bombs going off, etc?

AA: "Oh no, it was nowhere as bad."

"But you know it was still Vietnam and somewhere that you didn't feel very comfortable in."

"I mean as I said we were there to play football and nothing else."

"I suppose you never

thought about those kind of things but now looking back on it you say, 'Christ how crazy'."

GS: On those sorts of tours what was the training regime on tour like?

Was it pretty casual or all very serious?

AA: "Well you're now talking thirty years ago and the facilities were absolutely terrible."

"I mean we had training grounds in Vietnam for argument's sake that now you wouldn't even send a bunch of school-kids onto train."

"It was just absolutely pathetic."

"But again, to play for Australia we would have trained anywhere regardless - and we did."

"I mean we trained on top of a building for example in Vietnam."

"There was no training facility and we stayed at a place called the golden building which was the name of the hotel we stayed in."

"It was probably a twenty storey building or whatever, ten story building whatever."

"A great big roof on top and that's where we trained a couple of times because they just could not provide us with a proper training ground."

GS: Who was the Australian coach at the time?

AA: "Uncle Joe Vlasits."

"He had the team from '67 right up to the end of '69 and Rale Rasic took over in 1970 up till the end of '74."



The late, great Phil Bottalico

GS: At the end of 1967 you went on the Asian tour in the Socceroos squad.

AA: "Yeah we went to Vietnam."

even now think why on earth did they ever go ahead with it."

"Look, as far as we were concerned we never came near any dangerous

percent of that particular team dropped out completely."

"Now this new team of '67, the average age was around 21 - so basically

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MAY 1999



MARK Bosnich looks set to sign for Manchester United.

This week he talks about his future as he looks almost certain to be back in his native country in July.

Should Bosnich not sign for United then he will line up

against them in a two game series due to take place in Sydney and Melbourne.

Meanwhile Mark Schwarzer has declared himself unavailable for Australia – with the ASF likely to step in and take action.

AUSSIE KEEPERS



WOLVES coach Nick Theodorakopoulos has joined the ASF coaching staff – at least for the trip to Fiji with the Joeys.

Tipped to be on the verge of leaving Wollongong City the lure of international foot-

ball may yet be strong enough to keep the talented young NSL coach at home.

Rumours abound in Wollongong that he is on his way to Greece while stories of player unrest at the Wolves are also commonplace.

AUSSIE COACHES

HUNTER TO STAY

by Bruce Campbell

IN THE wake of the sacking of record NSL appearance holder Norman Kelly a number of staff changes are set to happen at the Canberra Cosmos.

But one player who wants to commit his future to the wooden spooners is Scottish import Gordon Hunter.

This season Hunter took a massive pay-cut to return to the Cosmos – even more laudable considering the acrimonious circumstances which led to his departure the season before.

But all that is in the past and Hunter is looking to the new season as one in which the Cosmos can shake of that easy beat tag.

"Things have looked great with Tommy Sermanni," he says.

"Training's good and the players are enjoying themselves.

"I certainly am and the way the results have turned around would suggest that we can get a lot higher up the table next season."

But the truth is that the 'revival' of the Cosmos in both of the last two seasons has coincided with the former Hibernian captain.

It was Hunter's arrival which turned Branko Culina's fortunes around at the club and Sermanni has been quick to acknowledge the influence that the Scotsman has had on his team.

Despite the limitations on his playing staff budget Sermanni will be desperate to find a place for Hunter.

Kelly has paid the price of indifferent performances as well as countless suspensions earned from a style of play which has found no favour with Australia referees.

"Kelly's style just doesn't suit Australian soccer," said a former member of the Cosmos coaching staff.

"He picks up too many bookings and in the end that means that he isn't as valuable to the team."

But while Kelly's over-aggressive play has led to his departure it seems that the controlled-aggression of Hunter will lead the club to new heights. The season begins for the Cosmos in August when pre-season starts; hopefully for Canberra fans Gordon Hunter will be there.



Gordon Hunter: looking forward to pre-season training with the hope that Canberra Cosmos will finally get it together

INSIDE SOCCER

Australia's weekly soccer Bible OUT EVERY TUESDAY
from coast to coast

Tommy speaks

by Alan Clark

It would have been difficult to reconcile the Canberra on show at Bob Jane with the team that started the 1998/99 campaign in such disastrous style.

Cosmos took until round 15 - midway through the season - to earn its first league point.

By that stage, Canberra was already eleven points adrift at the foot of the table, and there were mutterings about whether they deserved their spot in the national competition.

But just fifteen weeks later, Cosmos was matching league leaders South Melbourne at South, and relying on the Bob Jane crowd to work on the nerves of the home side.

Was this the secret of Canberra's points-gain?

Stall for a scoreless draw?

"We knew how South Melbourne played, so initially we did drop behind the ball," said Sermanni.

"But we felt that if we kept our discipline there - and particularly let our wing-backs get forward to support our strikers - we could cause (South Melbourne) problems.

"So we do a balance of both.

"I don't just deliberately sit players behind the ball and stop playing.

"We went out that way (against South) because we knew the longer the game went on as long as it was 0-0 the better it would be for us, because of their crowd," Sermanni said, showing his knowledge of the pressure South can face from its restless home support.

"Once we can stick with our shape, we look a much better team.

"We do break quite well, we're a team that actually does break forward quite well and get players forward in support."

"Since mid-year, the W and D columns of Canberra's record have been moving - still not enough to overcome the disastrous start, but enough to give encouragement.

If Cosmos plays next season as well as it has finished this one, there's some promise.

Sermanni hasn't taken on the responsibility to guide Canberra to another honourable season at the foot of the ladder -



he's hoping for better things.

"We want to get off the bottom of the league," he says.

"We want to aim towards mid-table.

"There's a bit of optimism at the club."

If Canberra manages a win against Gippsland in the last round, that'll be 17 points earned since Sermanni arrived in round 14.

Until that first point which was obtained in a 1-1 away draw against the Falcons, Canberra had strung together thirteen consecutive defeats.

With 17 points in half a season, it's not unrealistic to suggest Cosmos may have garnered 34 in a full campaign if the start had equalled the end.

That places Canberra tenth, instead of two games clear in the basement.

"At that rate, we're in there and we're competitive," said Sermanni.

"Overall, I've never been disappointed with the effort of the players, and that's a good starting point.

"I don't think it was a club that should have been on no points when I

arrived.

"The team's not of that (poor) quality that they should have had no points.

"I'm pleased at (our recent form), but we've still got a fair bit of work to do - we're still bottom of the league."

Particularly over the last year and a half, the area that's let Canberra down is on the field.

The things behind the scenes have actually been pretty good, but it's always difficult when

you've got a team that loses continuously - if South Melbourne had



Lindsay Wilson: the Cosmos defender was a rare Australian success in Nigeria '99

Canberra Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni came to the then haemorrhaging club mid-season. At that time, Cosmos was stone motherless last in the league and without a point.

Sermanni is a well-respected name as a football coach - including his recent time coaching the Matildas, and overseas in Japan as Eddie Thomson's assistant. He didn't have much to prove, and for some, his move to the Canberra hot-seat was a puzzle.

In an exclusive interview with Inside Soccer's Alan Clark following Cosmos narrow loss away at champions South Melbourne in round 29, Sermanni discussed the season just gone coaching the team from the nation's capital, his hopes for the future, as well as reviewing his time in Japan and with the Matildas.

gone 23 games without winning, I don't think you'd see a terrific crowd here - you'd see a club in trouble.

"The key thing for me will be to start the season well," adds the coach.

"Canberra have never started well - that's one aim.

"What I've got to do is make sure we get on-field results next year - that's critical.

"The rest of the club, off the field, is actually in reasonable shape.

"We've got a big squad of players, and I need to make some rational decisions.

"At the same time I need to strengthen the squad, but not the same way as in the past - I need to be really careful who we bring in.

"I'd rather bring in two or three players of quality, rather than have an exodus of players and an influx of players."

Canberra faces some of the obstacles that Perth Glory does in that it is a single national club in a clearly defined market, but without an infrastructure or a national Youth team which feeds players into the first eleven.

I asked if there was the possibility of Cosmos creating the arrangements that Glory has with players operating in local

bourne's squad - it's a nice, compact, workable squad of very good players.

"We've got a big squad and we need to make tough decisions to get it down to a workable squad that's going to be competitive."

In one of the few positives to come out of the Young Socceroos' performance in Nigeria in the Youth World Cup was the emergence on the international stage of left-sided defensive midfielder Lindsay Wilson, a Cosmos player.

Whereas many national league coaches bemoaned the loss of their players at this crucial part of the season, Sermanni was delighted Wilson was given the opportunity.

"It was terrific," he said.

"Any player that I've got under me at a club level who gets picked for any international team will get my support and my club's full support.

"It's great.

"It's an honour for the player and it's an honour for the club - they'd have my complete support."

Wilson was playing very well the last two or three games prior to him going to the Youth World Cup and he carried that form into (the

two goals at home in my first game," adds Sermanni.

"Since then, he's got better and better."

Before his return to Australia, Sermanni was coaching as Eddie Thomson's assistant in Japan.

Most of what we read about the game in Japan is that it is a growing sport, with popular support, and exciting domestic and imported players.

Japan's Youth World Cup team won through to the finals, defeating Mexico - conquerors of Australia this time, and Portugal - previously too good for the Young Socceroos.

How did he enjoy his time in this emerging football nation?

"I had a fantastic two years there," he says.

"I loved living in Japan, I could go back living there tomorrow.

"I had two years there as an assistant to Eddie, and that was great.

"But when it starts to go on longer, particularly when you've been in charge somewhere yourself, you want to take charge of things (of your own).

"The two years were brilliant.

"Mike Hickman has gone out with Eddie this year, and I think that's a good swap as well.

"I'd rather bring in two or three players of quality, rather than have an exodus of players and an influx of players."

competition able to be called in.

"Most of our players can't go back and play in the local comp," says Sermanni.

"The local (season doesn't coincide) with the national league.

"So during the national league period, there's no other football in Canberra.

"The problem is at the moment we've got such a big squad.

"I look at South Mel-

bourne).

Particularly in his first two games where he played in his normal position, he was arguably our best player over there.

He's come back, and he's not really affected by things - he just gets up and gets on with it.

He's in a rich vein of form.

"When I first came to Cosmos, he had quite a few bad habits - which gave South Melbourne

"Football is good there, lifestyle is good.

"The football is technically very good, the players are physically very good."

Australian clubs playing overseas clubs is how the countries' respective leagues can be compared.

Whereas in Europe there's a plethora of club competition across national boundaries, there's nowhere to go for Ericsson teams, except the mooted Federations'



Canberra Cosmos: expectations are starting to amount for a re-birth under Sermanni

Champion Clubs' competition.

If there was to be a competition between the top tier of Japanese clubs and their Australian counterparts, how does Sermanni think the Australians would fare?

"I think the Japanese teams would just be a little bit too strong for the NSL teams," he says.

"The Japanese teams would technically be a little bit better, and they're all pretty much full-time players.

"That would probably give them the edge."

"Australian players and teams are tougher - probably the weakness with the Japanese and the Asian countries in general is their lack of finishing things off.

"I think the western (way of playing) is much tougher and better at that, so that would make our teams competitive (against the Japanese).

"The other thing is with the money involved in the game there, most of the top teams have got three quality imports.

"(Brazil's) Dunga has just finished playing there, (Yugoslavia's) Stojkovic is still playing there, (Bulgaria's) Stoikov as well.

"If you bring in three quality imported players to Australian teams, that would make a marked difference as well.

"If you took eighty players out of Japan, and played them overseas,

like we're doing, then there'd be a marked difference (in J-League standards) as well.

"I don't know if people take that into account when they talk about the Australian League.

"Take eighty players out of most leagues - smaller leagues like ours - and there's a fair hole there. So I think our league is pretty good when you look at who's actually not playing here.

"But at international level, if the full Australian team went out against them I think Australia would be too strong for them."

When observing the Japan national team it's obvious they play a lightning-fast game.

I asked if that's the way the game is played at club level.

"Yeah - they play a lot quicker (than Australian football)," says the Canberra coach. "They play a lot of short stuff, they're all fairly quick."

Sermanni was also coach of the Matildas - the national women's team shortly to play in the World Cup in the USA mid-year, and then as host-nation, already qualified for the 2000 Olympics.

It's been two years since he was coach, but during his time in charge, Australia's reputation was enhanced. Has he been keeping tabs on the Matilda's recent progress, and how does he see their

future?

"The planing is going OK," he says.

"They've just gone to a tournament in Portugal (Australia finished fifth in a tournament that involved Denmark, Sweden, China, and Portugal), which isn't a bad result.

"When I first took over, the national team hadn't played for two years.

"It was a real confidence thing getting them on the park and feeling comfortable against international competition.

"I think they've now reached that stage.

"I think they'll go out against Sweden and Denmark feeling as equals which is a good thing.

"What they need to do, I suppose, is get the first really good result at a competition or against one of the major teams."

I mentioned the recent series against Italy and Canada in Canberra at which the Matildas had acquitted themselves admirably - defeating highly ranked Italy in the final.

"Yeah - that was good," he agrees. "I mean when I go back to my time against Canada, it was nip and tuck - so we've started overtaking teams.

"(The next step is) to go to a tournament and maybe beat a Holland or a Denmark as well as beat the poorer teams.

"That's a crux thing (beating the poorer teams).

"It's like South Melbourne beating us tonight, people would say like 'Canberra played really well, and South Melbourne not as good as they should have,' but at the end of the day South Melbourne won one-nil.

"(The Matildas) have probably got to take that step.

"But things are going well, and things are continuing to improve.

"There's a core of Matildas who have based themselves overseas in recent times - Cheryl Salisbury one of the more notable players who has played in Japan."

This can only be good for the Matilda's quest for international honours, according to Sermanni.

by Anya Whitelaw

Belconnen United have defeated Canberra City 3-2 in the ACT Women's Soccer Association Cup final after the game went to extra time.

The first half saw no real chances for either team, most shots on goal coming from outside the box.

The best opportunity of the half went to Belconnen's Clorinda Ianucci, beating City goalkeeper Michelle Tifan only to have her shot go wide.

Both teams lifted in intensity for the second half.

INSIDE SOCCER Australia's weekly soccer Bible OUT EVERY TUESDAY

Belconnen defeat City in tight match to take Cup

only to see Nancy Foot hit back straight after this from a penalty kick for City.

At the end of normal play the scores were locked at 1-1, sending the game into extra time.

Cindy Doyle put Belconnen back in front, but Foot again levelled the scores for City from another penalty shot.

The second period of extra time saw some aggression amongst players and Belconnen's Daniel Hepperlin sent-off for a foul tackle.

Despite being a player short, Doyle scored the final goal to see Belconnen win the Association Cup three goals to two from City.

Belconnen coach Bridget Starr said it was a "well deserved victory" for her players considering the obstacles her side had faced.

Coach of City, Chris Florentine said: "It was a very tough and aggressive match with both teams playing well.

"I am very proud of my side, but congratulations to Belconnen."

In other matches, Belconnen were 4-0 winners over City in the Watson Cup, Queenbeyan Cobras defeated Cooma 3-2 in a penalty shoot out to take the Heather Reid Trophy, and ANU downed Weston Creek 2-0 to win the Briggs Shield.

MONARO

PROFILE OF AN AUSTRALIAN SOCCER CLUB

Humble beginnings, highs and lows - and now the future

by Bruce Campbell

THE Monaro Soccer Club owes its origins to the earlier Inter Monaro SC which was founded in Queanbeyan in 1967.

The original club was formed by Italian migrants and the name and the colours they adopted reflected their heritage.

The club's traditional green and black stripes shirts were modelled on Italian soccer club Venice while in those early years the blue and black stripes of Inter Milan were also worn as an alternate shirt.

The inclusion of the word Inter in the name also reflects the influence of Inter Milan supporters in the club's formative years.

In 1967 Inter Monaro were included in the ACT 2nd Division with Mario Donda senior as its first coach.

The first recorded match of the new club was on March 7, 1967 against the Canberra Juventus reserve team, a game



which ended in a 2-1 defeat. The name Donda was syn-

onymous with Monaro in those early years and that first

goal was scored by Mario Donda junior.



FACTFILE

Monaro Soccer Club

Home Ground: Riverside Stadium, Queanbeyan

President: John Barilaro

Coach: Ian Heywood

Founded: 1967 (as Inter Monaro). Defunct 1990, re-formed 1995 (as Monaro)

Honours:

NSW State League Premiership: 1984

NSW State League Championship: 1984

ACT Division 1 Grand Final: 1977

ACT Division 1 Premiership: 1977

Federation Cup: 1976, 77

ACT Division 2 Premiership: 1967, 1995

League History:

1967 ACT Division 2

1968-77 ACT Division 1

1978-84 NSW State League

1985-86 NSL Northern Conference

1987-90 NSW State League

1995 ACT Division 2

1996- ACT Premier League

Colours:

Green & Black shirts

Green Shorts and black socks

Internationals: (Australia)

S Giampaolo v Greece 1978

Jones, Laurie Palic, Mike Black, Paul Massi, Kenni Kawaleva, Stuart Devlin, Nick Boskov and Jock Coulter.

But it wasn't until the signing of Walter Valeri from Juventus that things really started to happen.

In 1977 Valeri was top scorer with 21 of the 100 goals he would score for the Queanbeyan club and Inter Monaro took the league for the first time in its history.

Bobby Noble, George Campbell, John Santolin, Baz Giampaolo, Billy Willox, Peter Lawler, Ian Cumming and Alan Reis - as well as the incomparable Walter Valeri.

Many of these players had played with top Australian clubs and over the next couple of years many would also transfer from NSL Canberra City.

In its seven year tenure in the NSW State League

His brother George was also to become a prominent player.

Even from those early days the club had ambitions and embarked on many innovative projects to increase its financial base including the building of a house which was sold to eventually fund the building of its own stadium on the banks of the Molonglo River.

At the time the Stadium was the most prestigious in local soccer and offered facilities far in excess of those enjoyed by most NSW State League clubs.

From the beginning a number of the club's supporters had sights set on targets far greater than the local ACT league which, in those days, was generally a two horse race between Juventus, the other Italian backed club, and Croatia Deakin.

In 1967 Inter Monaro won three trophies and as second division champions were promoted to the ACT first division.

Monaro had won the second division by a massive ten point margin - and hadn't dropped a single point, only conceding a mere eight goals along the way.

And in their first year in the first division Inter took second place, splitting Juventus and Croatia Deakin.

The arrival of Laurie Pastrello as president marked a period in which Monaro would stamp its name as one of the powerhouses of ACT soccer.

In the years that followed they were seldom out of the Top 4 and gradually started to acquire a base of players which was to include the cream of local talent; Keith

That year they also won the Grand Final with a 3-2 win over Juventus, who were runners up in the league five points adrift, in front of a four thousand plus crowd at Seifert Stadium.

That triumph saw their application for membership to the NSW State League accepted and the club signed a

Monaro had only one bad season, 1982 when it finished a disappointing 12th.

Every other season saw it challenging for honours culminating in the 1984 NSW State Premiership and Championship.

Inter Monaro defeated Rockdale 2-1 in the Grand Final that year at St George

COACHES 1967-1999

Mario Donda Senior

Marcello Svorenich

Gunther Gross

Nick Cossettini

Frank Virano

Mike Rezik

Rod West

Jeo Arquero

Frank Maccarone

Roberto Vieri

Joseph Prokov

Steve Clarke

Vic Fernandez Senior

Walter Valeri

Harry Williams

Tony Brennan

Ian Heywood

ALL TIME LEADING SCORERS

100 Walter Valeri

86 Sebastian Giampaolo

43 Marko Perinovic

41 Kenni Kawaleva

41 Frank Virano

31 Ian Heywood

31 Albert Tine

30 Mario Donda

24 Paul Massi

23 Lew Farkas

* Information supplied by Jean-Paul Donda

string of new players to bolster its ranks.

During its time in the NSW State League many other prominent local players wore the green and black stripe shirts; Ian Heywood, Gerald Crawford, Allan Bourke,

Stadium with Walter Valeri scoring both goals.

That success propelled the club into the National League which by then had assumed a two conference look.

If the Inter Monaro of the mid and late '70s saw a boom

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period in local soccer then the mid '80s will go down in history as the most disastrous epoch of all.

The conference set-up was a complete flop and faced with spiralling costs and dwindling spectators many clubs suffered badly.

Inter Monaro was one of those and after two seasons in which they had never looked capable of matching it with the metropolitan clubs they were shown the door.

From 1987 until 1990 Monaro soldiered on in the NSW State League where one of their rivals was a revamped Canberra City.

But Monaro never again scaled the heights and at the end of the 1990 they folded.

"So we weren't getting paid, attendances were low, our club folded and we came second last," star player Tony Brennan was quoted as saying in the Canberra Times.

"Things could have been worse, Croatia could have come first."

Canberra Croatia, the continuance of Canberra City, had come second just missing out on promotion to the NSL by two points as Wollongong United took the spot instead.

But the truth was that the Canberra region could never support two teams at that level and Inter were destined to be a long way second best.

The absence of adrenalin created by walking past the dressing rooms and sniffing the limelight obviously had an effect because just five years later Monaro, this time without the Inter and the stadium name changed from Marco Polo to Riverside, were back – formed by the energy of former players John Santolin and Tony Brennan.

With Brennan in the coaching position and Santolin pulling on the boots for another round the team of no stars won the second division by one point from

Burns Club.

That saw promotion to the first division and the disaster of a season in which they only won one single game and scored a miserly 13 goals.

But for the fact that ANU refused to accept promotion it would have meant a slip back into the second tier.

Instead, they had a doggie's chance – and made the necessary changes on the park to stay up.

A new coach and a galaxy of new players saw the changes that led to the club now being regarded, once again, as one of the top clubs in the ACT.

The future?

That lies in the questions currently being asked in Canberra of soccer as a whole.

The truth is that local soccer has slipped back a peg or two and NSL soccer has moved forward ten light years.

Somewhere in the middle maybe lies the answer.

Monaro are certain to be part of that answer.

He's not Mr Popular with everyone at Monaro but former England schoolboy international Ian Heywood is

LOOKING TO LAND THE SILVERWARE

THE man at the helm during the revival of Monaro is former Canberra City professional Ian Heywood.

Heywood has been in Canberra for over thirty years, so long in fact that he feels almost an Aussie.

Whether he can tear himself away from his native England totally is academic because he is living proof of the positive effect that an NSL club has on a city.

"I just loved Canberra so when I stopped playing with City I stayed on," he said.

"I've got a good job here and I enjoy being involved in the game so I don't have really any ambitions to move on.

"Maybe I should have but I like it here so why look for something else which may not be there?"

Heywood is a former England schoolboy international and actually started his football out as a full time apprentice with English league club Preston.

A recommendation saw him

join City and then he transferred to Inter Monaro where he enjoyed a successful spell.

These days he doubles up in his duties at Monaro with the appointment as ACT Representative coach.

That is an honorary position but it is one in which he takes great satisfaction.

"That's right," he says, "it gives me exposure at a different level and I enjoy that.

"I enjoyed my time as assistant coach to Mike Lyons at the Canberra Cosmos and that is one of the drawbacks about local soccer here.

"There is a huge difference between ACT League and NSL and not being involved at the higher level leaves a gap."

Heywood has transformed Monaro although he hasn't always enjoyed the support from within the club which would merit the improved



status he has brought.

He is aware that he isn't always Mr Popular but insists that he is there to do his best for the Queanbeyan club – his way.

Last season he survived an attempt to sack him and goes into this season knowing that there are huge expectations from his squad of players.

"When I came here I came with a three year plan," he says.

"The first year was to re-establish the club and we did just that, just missing out on the Top 4.

"The second year I wanted to make the Top 4 and we finished up second.

"Now in the third year it is time that we won something but already we are in the semi finals of the Federation Cup this Thursday so we are on track.

"We are also in the Top 4 and have had a good pre-season and early start to the season.

"That is important for the club.

It is also important that we have some younger players coming through and we have with Brett Chick coming soon from the ACT Academy,

Heath Gillett who is an Australian schoolboy international and young Peter MacLeod, a sixteen year old we signed from Tuggeranong.

"There are three or four others who will also break through this season."

Heywood has never been one to disguise his liking of quality and experience and in

his current squad he also lists former NSL players Jimmy Baxter, Joe Campagna and Johnny Nelson as well as Australian indoor international Danny Macor.

Heywood also sees the club's future in the development of a junior nursery.

That hasn't happened yet although he has hopes that something will eventuate shortly.

"The club is talking with Queanbeyan Juniors," says Heywood.

"That is the first step, at least the lines of communication are now open.

"If we are going to meet the new criteria being set by Soccer Canberra for next season then we need to become more business like.

"A junior foundation is just one part of that."

Bruce Campbell



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Wishing the Monaro Soccer Club all the best for the 1999 season

ACT BIG MATCH UPDATE

MONARO CRUISES TO FIVE GOAL WIN

compiled by
NICK GUOTH

MONARO overan Burns Club in the first half of last Sunday's ACT Premier league game and then cruised to a 7-2 win.

In a period of one-way traffic, Monaro piled on six goals and should have had at least another 10.

Within the first three minutes, they could have been two up first with Danny Macor heading over and then Matt Cachia heading against the woodwork.

It took nine minutes for the first.

A long ball found Macor on the right and after beating his man, sent in a low cross for attacking partner Lazar Simeonov to head in.

A few minutes later Macor wandered through some flimsy defence after Joe Campagna set him up, but his shot found the side-netting.

A quarter of an hour gone and a Valerio Galeotti throw found Macor free.

His cross was met sweetly by Cachia at the back post to make it 2-0.

Another four minutes where a corner from John Rakic was met by Jim Baxter at the near post.

His looping header went over the keeper and into the far side of the net.

Macor and Simeonov worked well to set up the former, but again he found the wrong side of the net.

Matt Cachia also had another chance with his head, but that too went wide.

Ten minutes before the break Lazar Simeonov set up Rakic on the edge of the penalty area.

His solid strike gave poor Shane Read in goals no chance.

Two more minutes for number five.

Valerio received the ball near the half-way line on the right.

He beat his opponent, raced into the penalty area and shot true.

Finally, on the stroke of half-time, Greg Lemin took out Cachia in the box.

Danny Macor took the penalty shot and rifled it past Read.

Six nil at the break and obviously Burns coach Steve Bryant had a few words to say.

His team showed somewhat a bit more spirit and came back into the game.

A free kick on the right

was taken by Gardiner Murray ten minutes in. In a crowded box, Josh Turco made contact and gave the Burns supporters something to cheer about.

Both teams then settled down to play some football, although the result was already in the bag. Burns were now more

Macor stepped up to make it a double from the penalty spot.

With five minutes to go Valerio Galeotti sent a through ball to Simeonov.

He rounded Read and shot towards goal, but Varley for Burns was able to get back in time to clear off the line.

wood said that the first half was "some of the best football played by Monaro in years."

"I was very happy with the performance" he said.

"The damage was done in the first 15 minutes, and it is hard to keep motivated for 90 minutes when you are up 6-0 by half-time."

Canberra Olympic battled out a grim 0-0 draw in the ACT Premier League match of the day at Bruce Stadium on Saturday writes Greg Welsh.

Played as a curtain-raiser to the NSL match between the Canberra Cosmos and the Gippsland Falcons, the game was an important

Gaby Exposito found himself unexpectedly in space in the 26th minute and unleashed a long-range effort which bounced awkwardly in front of Olympic's goalkeeper Angelo Konstantinou.

The 'keeper did well to deflect the ball past his right post and maintain the deadlock.

Four minutes later, Olympic's fullback Takis Arvanitis swung a left-footed cross onto the head of striker Elia Saloum.

His neat flick found Arsenje Popovich who was brought down in front of goal.

The referee pointed to the spot and Njegosh Popovich stepped forward to take the penalty kick.

However, Deakin 'keeper Pedro Pavez guessed correctly and managed to block the ball away with his right hand.

The teams traded half-chances until the 70th minute when the sending off of Deakin striker Ben Deighan for a second bookable offence swung the game in Olympic's favour.

Olympic nearly found the winner nine minutes later when Njegosh Popovich latched onto a Con Kobas cross, only to have the ball rebound off the left-hand upright.

Olympic dominated the match thereafter, with Pino Seminara again coming close to snatching the win a few minutes from fulltime.

Seminara took off on a jinking run into the Deakin penalty area and struck a sweetly-timed shot that shaved the outside of the left post.

The 0-0 result seemed adequate reward for a disappointing performance from both sides, who will each need to lift their intensity if they are to challenge for the title this season.

AT Woden Park Weston Creek Royals continued their run of victories with a solid 5-2 defeat over the University of Canberra.

Weston had most of the play for the first 30 minutes, but dropped off for the remainder of the half to allow the students back into the game.

The Creek scored first through Peter Hader after a Hani Adhami cross in the fourth minute.

Half-way through the period a Steve Lazzari

shot came back of the woodwork.

His brother Martin was following up and his header gave Uni's 'keeper no chance.

Simon Foxhill for the students started to stamp himself on the game after the half hour mark setting up at least three chances.

One of these was converted when Foxhill's shot came back off the post and Dominic Bartone put away the rebound.

Two-one at the break and University were looking the better, but with just one minute into the second period, Steve Lazzari whilst on the ground managed to scramble the ball into the goal.

The game remained stalemated for most of the second half until a flourish of goals in the last ten minutes.

A Martin Lazzari free kick took a deflection of a defender and beat the 'keeper.

The with just over five minutes left, Matt Stocks set up Steve Lazzari for an easy tap-in.

Finally in extra-time, Weston gave away an own goal with Adrian Parragali heading into his own net whilst under pressure.

Weston coach Jimmy Bland said the result flattered his team.

"They showed a fair bit of character in the second half, but the first was disappointing."

For Uni, Rod Lynes was pleased with his side's performance in the first half stating: "it was the best so far this year and shows promising signs for the future."

SECOND half goals to Capital City Suns strikers Gus Cerro and Tony Lemezina handed Gungahlin Juventus a 2-1 lesson in clinical finishing during their ACT Premier League meeting at Jamison Oval on Sunday writes GREG WELSH.

Possession was evenly shared throughout a first half full of attacking endeavour but lacking in final-pass precision.

Juventus spurned excellent opportunities in the 20th and 32nd minutes, and but for a lack of composure in front of goal could have taken a 2-0 lead into the half-time break.

In the first instance, Juventus' goalkeeper Dennis Langone's long punt bounced over the



Marko Perinovic: the big striker is back at Belconnen United after a spell with NSL Gippsland Falcons

competitive, especially in midfield, while Monaro had taken the foot off the pedal.

At the half-hour mark of the second period substitute Littlewood of Burns tripped Lazar Simeonov in the box and

Then in the dying minutes of the game, Mark Collett picked up the ball in midfield and from 25m out sent a shot into the top left corner to give Burns their second goal of the day.

Monaro coach Ian Hey-

On the other side Steve Bryant was disappointed saying "the boys need to learn quicker or this will happen more often. There was not enough passion out there."

CANBERRA Deakin and

one for both sides after mixed results in the first two rounds.

However the game turned out a scrappy affair with neither team able to keep possession for extended periods.

Deakin midfielder



Belconnen United's Jason Dunn

heads of the Suns defence and was brought down neatly by striker George Cattanaach.

He turned and struck a first-time shot which seemed goal-bound until a diving Tony Giannasca managed to palm the ball wide.

A free-kick on the corner edge of the penalty area twelve minutes later provided Juventus with their second opportunity.

Cattanaach rolled the ball to Louie Gaspari, whose powerful left-foot drive cleared the crossbar by only inches.

But it was the Suns' Cerro who turned the game on its head two minutes into the second half, when he expertly brought down a lofted through-ball with his right foot before cracking a left-foot shot into the back of the net.

To their credit, Juventus responded by pushing more players forward in search of an equaliser,

but paid the price 18 minutes later when the Suns brought up their second goal.

This time it was Pat Phommaseisy and substitute Yuki Ondo combining well down the left before supplying Lemezina with the ball in front of goal.

Lemezina turned his marker delightfully before placing the ball into the corner of the net from close range.

Juventus played their last trump card when they pushed playmaker Oscar Zamora forward from sweeper to midfield.

The move nearly paid off minutes later when Zamora's curling cross found Cattanaach unmarked in front of goal, however the striker could get no more than a glancing header onto the ball.

Another Zamora cross two minutes later was deftly back heeled by Cattanaach into the path of Josh Quarmby whose

sprayed shot left him holding his head in frustration.

A Niall Stoddart goal deep into stoppage time proved too little too late for Juventus, and served only to slightly disappoint Suns' coach Bill Dojcinowski.

"2-0 I would have been happier. 2-1 I'm still happy," Dojcinowski said.

The coach was pleased his players responded to his half-time plea to give one hundred per cent in the second period, and particularly praised the attacking efforts of Cerro and the pacy Ondo.

"I think we will improve," Dojcinowski said.

"Hopefully if the registration goes through by next week, Ilija Prenzowski from the Cosmos is going to be on the side.

"That will give us a lot more speed in the midfield and pushing forward."

AT Riverside Oval there

was another rout of lowly Queanbeyan City Lions, this time by Belconnen United and by a scoreline of 8-1.

Scorers for Belconnen were Adrian Dowling 2, Jason Dunn, Scott Manson, Luke Larfield, Obe Shadmann, Damian Tunney and Matt Whyte whilst Steve Roberts picked up the sole score for Queanbeyan.

Roberts may have even broken a Canberra record when he, having played in the Under 23's as well, kicked off 34 times. The other scoreline was 24-0 to Belconnen.

Belconnen also brought on a substitute at half-time who will become a major player in the teams move for the premiership this season.

Marko Perinovic, having played the night before for Gippsland Falcons made his debut for the season having his clearance come through in time.



Monaro striker Donny Macor

CANBERRA SOCCER

IN March 1992 *Canberra Soccer Weekly* was born.

A lively and topical local newspaper it had instant success. So much so that later that year it blossomed into the national publication, *Champion Soccer*.

Those early beginning marked my Duntroon's involvement with soccer publishing in Australia and since then that success, through some fairly high ups and downs, has taken us forward to *Inside Soccer*.

Along the way others have tried to provide Canberra with a successful publication but have all gone by the wayside. With our roots very firmly in the production of local soccer, and Canberra in particular, it is appropriate that *Duntroon Publishing* launches this monthly publication.

Initially this will see *Canberra Soccer* being available as a free insert with *Inside Soccer*. The next issue, which will be increased in page numbers, will be published, again in tandem with Australia's best selling soccer publication, on Tuesday May 25 and then on the fourth Tuesday of the month afterwards.



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NSW SUPER LEAGUE BIG MATCH UPDATE

TIGERS SLAM SIX PAST LOWLY EASTS

By Patrick Galloway

A MAMMOTH five-goal haul from striker Steve Karavatakis gave Leichhardt Tigers an easy win over Eastern Suburbs last Sunday at Lambert Park in what were ideal conditions for soccer.

The win for Leichhardt will keep them well in contention for a finals position sitting just outside the four, while for Eastern Suburbs, losing away from home has now become a regularity, with the side still not having collected a single competition point away from home well into the season.

From the opening of the match it was clear

that Eastern Suburbs were going to use the flanks and play the ball on the ground in hope of countering the strengths of the Leichhardt defence — their height and obvious strength in the air.

In the opening 15 minutes it worked with some degree of reliability as Naoki Iwaya in central midfield constantly looked to play the ball wide, particularly to Mark Beldham on the right.

Leichhardt, however, were more than content to play their usual counter-attacking style of football and in the 41st minute, it reaped dividends.

A long ball down the

right flank by Blago Milicevic saw Sarkis Boudaher find some space down the line and drill the ball across the goal mouth in front of the hungry Steve Karavatakis who slammed the ball home to the left of a diving Con Anastasiadis.

With the score at 1 - 0 going into the half time break, Eastern Suburbs were still a good chance to pave their way back into the match, however a spate of goals just after the half time break quelled any hope that Eastern Suburbs may have had.

Within the space of three minutes, Steve Karavatakis amazingly slotted away three goals to take his tally for the match to four.

The first of that haul was thanks to some excellent work down the right by Boudaher in the

48th minute, who beat his man and then floated a cross in, finding Karavatakis at the back post.

The striker then provided some entertainment, launching himself into mid-air to complete a spectacular scissor-kick which put the ball past a beaten Anastasiadis, and into the back of the net.

Directly from the kick-off the ball was won by Leichhardt and played to Eric Hristodoulou.

The former NSL player found himself with plenty of time to run at a shaky Eastern Suburbs defence.

He then un-selfishly played the ball to Karavatakis, who held the ball up, then turned his man with ease and put the Tigers 3 - 0 up with his left foot.

Just one minute later, Karavatakis found the net once more thanks to a pin-point David James

pass from the right hand side, which found the striker a step ahead of his defender.

Karavatakis controlled the ball, then calmly put the ball to the right of a fast approaching Anastasiadis.

With the score at 4 - 0, Eastern Suburbs had little to play for except their pride, and in the 64th minute they regained some respect through tall central midfielder Vadim Mikoutski after Karavatakis lost possession in the middle of the park.

Mikoutski won the ball and did a brilliant one-two outside the area with Stevie Lawrence.

With the Leichhardt defence ball watching, Mikoutski then had time to blast the ball into the back of the net, leaving

Tigers keeper Frank Mikuletic without a chance.

It seemed as though the possibility of an Eastern Suburbs comeback triggered the lads from Leichhardt to lift yet another gear.

Eric Hristodoulou in the centre of the park was outstanding, looking ever at ease with the ball at his feet.

Indeed it was Hristodoulou who again had a role to play in Leichhardt's fifth goal.

With Eastern Suburbs pushing forward, a Hristodoulou run saw Leichhardt with a three on two man advantage in the last third.

Hristodoulou skilfully drew his man and played the ball to Karavatakis who once gain didn't let

the crowd down and put in his fifth goal away in the 72nd minute — an amazing effort.

For the remainder of the match Leichhardt peppered the Eastern Suburbs goal, and in the 89th minute, a run down the right by second half substitute Chris Lansdowne saw him play the ball into Karavatakis on the edge of the area.

Karavatakis then skilfully back-heeled the ball into the path of Lansdowne who had anticipated what would happen superbly and made a perfect run behind the goal hero.

Lansdowne then launched a thunderous shot which made its way straight into the top right hand corner for a 6 - 1 result to Leichhardt.

Round 13 may have got off to a wet start with the Central Coast's game against the Sutherland Sharks rained off, but there was still plenty to cheer about in the other games.

Bonnyrigg took on the Fairfield Bulls at the Serbian Centre with the Bulls just two points behind the White Eagles at the start of play, but Bonnyrigg are in no mood to surrender their League Premiership title from last year and smashed the Bulls for six. Striker Colin Luff was once again the main man for the White Eagles, and his hat-trick makes it 13 for the season. Javier Mancino also knocked in a brace of goals with midfielder Paul Dee also netting past the hapless Bulls.

The other two teams at the top also played, with Blacktown hosting Macarthur Rams, in a game, which saw a potent attack take on a mean defence. It was the attack that won out though, as Blacktown scored three without reply, goals from Jon Angelucci, his third in three games, and two from Jason Bennett sealing the win.

There was also a high-scoring affair at Wentworth Park, where Ryde City entertained Parramatta Eagles. The Eagles were without an away win this season, but ended that run with a 4-3 victory, Grant Bard taking his tally for the season to nine goals in scoring a brace.

The day's other game saw Canterbury Marrickville defeat Bankstown City 1-0, with a goal just 14 minutes from time by Steve Christoforidis.

NSW DIVISION 1 ROUND-UP

by Paul Goodwin

Stanmore Hawks, after a slow start to the season, are once again pressing for honours, with yet another big contribution from player-coach Eddie Briscoe in the Arlington Oval derby on Sunday.

Briscoe got there before the defence in the 33rd to steer in a cross after the Hawks had hit the post through Theo Katsaros earlier on and had looked

well on top.

When Sasha Spiroski was brought down on the edge of the Stanmore box in the 41st a free kick by John Sherry was only parried by Paul Kyprianou and Zlatko Momirovski put away the loose ball in the 41st for a surprise equaliser.

Right before the break veteran Burim Zajimi was allowed to stroll through the heart of the Dulwich defence and his

shot took a wicked deflection off Luis Perera as it sent keeper Peter Trajceviski the wrong way for the regained lead.

Briscoe completed the scoring in the 85th when he was first to react inside the area after the ball ran loose following a sustained period of pressure by the Hawks.

Hurstville City beat Auburn in the other game of the day at Hurstville Oval, Dario Fernandez

netting in the 20th and Tom Pontidas in the 80th for a solid win by the Minotaurs who are now looking in much better touch.

Stanmore is second with 14 points, well adrift of the only unbeaten side Manly-Warringah on 19.

Moorebank remains at the bottom, but have two games in hand on Dulwich Hill just above them who have just four points from their eight games so far.

New South Wales secures two match win over New Caledonia

THE New South Wales Soccer Federation's Division 1 Select got their two match tour of New Caledonia off to a flying start by defeating the hosts 2-1 at Magenta Stadium on Friday night.

Playing against the New Caledonian national team was never going to prove easy for the squad selected by Tony Pezzano, but goals by Dean Harding and Scott Mutton sealed victory.

Harding made it 1-0

after just 11 minutes, after a through ball from Bob Casserly was missed by the goalkeeper, leaving the Manly striker with a simple opportunity.

It stayed that way at the break despite some strong NSW pressure, but immediately after the restart Bathurst's Scott Mutton made it 2-0.

A superb through ball by Bill Petrovski saw Mutton have too much pace for the New Caledo-

nia defence and he finished confidently.

New Caledonia made it 2-1 in the last ten minutes with a penalty after Casserly was adjudged to have fouled, but the New South Wales team were able to hold on.

THE second game, played on Sunday April 25, saw the Division 1 side defeated New Caledonia for a second time in three days, winning 2-0 at the Magenta Sta-

dium.

New South Wales took the lead just a minute before half time when Damien Rosenthal turned sharply and sent the keeper the wrong way.

Kelvin Foster made it 2-0 after 69 minutes when he finished off a corner by Rosenthal, and although Nick Bolianitis was sent off with 12 minutes to go for two yellow card offences, the Select squad held on for a well-deserved victory.

INSIDE SOCCER

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ANZAC clash off

The ANZAC Cup tie between New South Wales and Northern New South Wales, due to be played at Jack McLaughlin Oval on Monday April 26, was called off.

Torrential rain in Newcastle means for the second year running the game has been postponed.

The two Federations though are still hopeful that the game can be played at a later date.

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND 14

Friday 30th April

Blacktown City Demons v Fairfield Bulls
Gabbie Stadium, 7:15pm (note — re-arranged match)

Saturday 1st May

Central Coast v Canterbury Marrickville
Plum Park, 6:00pm

Macarthur Rams v Leichhardt Tigers
Lynwood Park, 7:00pm

Sunday 2nd May

Parramatta Eagles v Bonnyrigg White Eagles
Melita Stadium, 3:00pm

Fairfield Bulls v Bankstown City Lions
Nineveh Field, 3:00pm

Eastern Suburbs v Ryde City
Wentworth Park, 3:00pm

Sutherland Sharks v Blacktown City Demons
Seymour Shaw Field, 3:00pm

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ILLAWARRA CREDIT UNION BIG MATCH UPDATE

Legal case drags on

PREMIER League side Wollongong White Eagles continue to defy the rule book by playing on in the Illawarra competition.

Last week the White Eagles were due in court to have their appeal heard against their expulsion but the Supreme Court ran out of time and the case has been rescheduled for this week.

"I would like to have had the case ended there and then," says ISA President Norman Flanagan, "but it wasn't to be."

"I believe that White Eagles have now got their appeal formally regis-

Eagles still to have day in court

tered with the NSWFS and I am delighted at that.

"I would prefer it if all appeals could be heard in our own system and we could avoid legal action."

Flanagan has good cause to feel that way as the latest trip to Sydney would have seen the ISA's legal costs spiralling by another few thousand dollars.


Support for the White Eagles is starting to grow

again in Wollongong although the ISA have refused to register the ten players whose residential status is the bone of contention which led to their expulsion.

AND in other news the representative clash against the ACT has been confirmed for Monday of the Queens Birthday weekend while the against Northern NSW has been cancelled.



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ILLAWARRA CREDIT UNION PREMIER LEAGUE ROUND 5

Saturday 1 May

Kemblawarra v Lysaghts

Albert Butler Memorial Park

Coniston Lions v Shoalhaven City

JJ Kelly Park

Northern United v Bulli

Memorial Park

Port Kembla v Wollongong White Eagles

Wetherall Park

Fernhill v Woonona

Towradgi

Cringila Lions v Olympic

Crehan Park

MATCH OF
THE
ROUND

Alston happy with his Port Kembla defensive V

PORT KEMBLA coach Adrian Alston remains philosophical about his team's uncertain start to the season. With just two rounds played in the Illawarra Credit Union Premier League Port were in bottom place - despite the fact that the all-star team were raging hot favourites to take this year's league.

After the opening defeat by Northern United Alston shrugged his shoulders but after a second defeat away to Bulli, and a convincing 3-0 one at that, the doubts were starting to creep in.

And the word at the club is that some of the committee members were getting anxious also. The former Soccerroo turned all that around with a thumping 8-2 win against newcomers

Shoalhaven City, a win which justified the team selections for which he was coming under criticism.

"I dropped a couple of players," he said, "and to be fair Paul Robbaard had been our best player so far. But against Shoalhaven I wanted to play a different system and he just didn't fit in. It wasn't that he isn't good enough but I wanted to play five across the midfield and that really didn't suit his style of play."

"Against Shoalhaven we were just different class but we still made mistakes. When we were five up we let them back in with a silly goal and I gave the players a roasting."

"They responded by going out straight away and scoring. They did the same when we were winning 7-1 and I yelled at them that they had to go

straight back and get a goal.

"We did and in the end I was quite pleased with our performance."

Alston feels that he now has his formation right, at least at the back. In goals he has Ben Harris, rated by most observers as the pick of the Illawarra keepers. In front of the former Canberra Cosmos player is a trio which has Giacomo Morlando at its pivot with Lawrence Hall and Robert Cazzoli in the other two spots.

"I've got the V the way I want it," says Alston of his defensive link, "and I can build the team on that. Unfortunately that means that the other players are fighting for the other spots but that is the way it is."

"We need to make changes when we play different teams."

PREMIER ILLAWARRA ACTION

PORT KEMBLA v Wollongong White Eagles

Wetherall Park, Primbee

Saturday 1 May

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Port Kembla is proudly sponsored by the Fraternity Club, Fairy Meadow

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE UPDATE

Bulleen top guns shooting blanks

by Bert van Bedaf

BULLEEN president Peter Balassone said chances of the Kings winning back-to-back Victorian Premier League titles were remote after losing 2-1 away to in-form Preston on Sunday.

"At the moment we can forget it," a disappointed Balassone said.

"We're going through a rough patch.

"The results are not going our way.

"We are losing games we shouldn't lose.

"We're trying to get back on track

"This was a crucial match for us.

"We got the chances today, but we can't put them away," he said.

Balassone was quick to quash any rumours that coach Gary Cole's position was in jeopardy.

"The coach has our full support," Balassone said.

After three home losses, to Thomastown 1-0, Fawkner 2-1 and Al-

tona East 1-0, the skids were rumoured to be under Cole's position.

The pressure can only be mounting after Sunday's loss, but Balassone's assurance should see Cole serving out his contract rather than being paid out.

The Kings can't take a trick at the moment. Against the Preston Lions, they saw the season flash before their eyes as fortune turned into failure.

They gained the numerical advantage after 26 minutes when Anthony Burlak was sent off for a foul on Agim Sherifovski.

Goal keeper Sean Keogh saved a penalty in the 32nd minute when Frank Valentic fouled Warren Spink inside the area.

Yet, the Lions took the

lead in the 38th minute with a Kamer Simsek goal from an acute angle on the counter.

Referee Andrew Stacey had no hesitation in red-carding Burlak.

Put through by striker Danny Gnjudic, Sherifovski had a clean run on goal before he was brought down.

Valentic's crude tackle near the goal line earned him a yellow card and Preston a penalty.

But Preston captain Chris Emsovski's shot proved easy prey for evergreen Keogh, who kept Bulleen in the match.

Preston's goal proved a cruel blow.

It began with Emsovski providing Joe Kozic wide on the right, who crossed for Simsek to force the ball home under pressure, badly rattling the Kings.

Out of form striker

Vlad Babic should have levelled for the Kings three minutes before half-time, but he shot wide with only Preston keeper Lou Acevski to beat.

Bulleen came out firing after the break, but its top guns, Gnjudic and Babic, continued to shoot blanks.

Gnjudic was wide off the far post in the 49th minute and nodded a header into Keogh's hands two minutes later, while Babic shot over the bar in the 55th.

Gnjudic again shot wide on the turn in the 66th and Babic failed from his second one-on-one in the 71st minute with Preston defender Robert Stojceviski hard on his heels.

Preston went further ahead in the 72nd minute when Emsovski made amends for his missed penalty, blasting home from a Sasa Ognenovski's through-pass.

Bulleen were unlucky in the 73rd.

Substitute Xessir Sule-

mani, on for John Waddell, headed home from close range, but Acevski saved with a reflex action.

Finally, Sava Rusmir broke through.

Preston had used the offside trap to great effect for most of the match, but with seven minutes left Rusmir timed his run right, restoring some respect to a battling Bulleen side.

Preston coach Vlado Vanis described the victory as "a beautiful win, losing a player so early in the game.

"But Bulleen are a good team and I expect them to be at the top at the end of the year.

"They had their chances to score," Vanis said.

He said Bulleen keeper, also Victoria's reigning best keeper, Sean Keogh was still outstanding.

"Like wine, he's getting better with age," Vanis said with a cheeky grin

on his face.

IN OTHER results fourth-bottom South Dandenong held leader Port Melbourne to a 2-2 draw last Saturday, fighting to stay in the Victorian Premier League.

The Sharks have lost six points in two rounds and may find it hard to regain their momentum against Bulleen on Sunday.

Fawkner continues to rise with a 3-0 win over relegation-bound Sunshine.

The Blues scored their fourth win in a row, climbing to sixth place.

They beat Springvale White Eagles, Westvale and Bulleen 2-1 and now struck out with three goals against fast sinking Sunshine.

With four teams going down, it looks like bottom-club Sunshine is destined for the drop.

Next week marks halfway into the season.

The Georgies face Bentleigh, who beat an-

other relegation candidate Springvale 6-1 on Sunday, and they'll need a miracle to earn a point.

Altona East under Peter Ollerton keeps adding points, holding Michael Urukalo's Westvale to a 0-0 draw.

But second-bottom Westvale also has the job in front of it and may well return to the State League after a single stint in the top rung.

IN ROUND 13, Port Melbourne hosts Bulleen in another top match.

Altona East travels to Springvale, while Bentleigh visits Sunshine. Altona Magic will be sorely tested by Fawkner at home and the St Albans Saints won't wear their halos against visiting Green Gully.

On Monday night Preston meets Westvale at Green Gully Reserve, while the Melbourne Raiders open the Epping stadium gates for South Dandenong.



Rams News

MDSFA update
with
Gary
Cremming



MACARTHUR Rams first grade team's big win over Central Coast saw the team sitting in first place on goal difference in the NSW Super League.

After a scoreless first half the Rams went on with the job in the second half to run out 4-0 winners.

Captain Martin Bourke has been an inspiration in midfield this year and its great to see him over the nagging injury problems he had last season.

Eric Williams survived the Rams Coaching Clinic and put in another trojan-like performance up front, constantly harassing the Coast defenders while Dion Valle put in one of his best performances of the season.

Shane Knight was in sparkling form against his former team mates with some great bursts up the left flank and also saving a certain goal late in the match.

IT WAS good to see Gary Newall keep Rams keeper Peter Munsie on his toes in the 21s match against the Coasties.

Gaz's 25 metre back pass brought out a great headed save from the keeper which proved he was awake.

UWS Macarthur Rams continued on their winning way scoring a 2-1 win over Gladesville Ravens taking the team to outright first position in the WSL.

Michelle Gosko and Julie Ward once again proved to be the dynamic duo for the UWS Rams with a goal each.

Michelle is a very talented sportswoman who is also a member of the Australian Women's Cricket team.

MACARTHUR Rams Under 21 team is sitting in third place following a scoreless draw with Central Coast. The squad contains no less than eleven players who have progressed from the Macarthur Rams Youth League squads or local clubs.

Eight of these players are aged between 16 and 18 - proof that the junior development programme is working.

BESIDES turning out good footballers the Rams are also turning out some pretty good administrators.

Former Rams director and current NSW Soccer Federation director Ross Kelly has been appointed SOCOG Competition Manager for the World XI match as well as the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Current MDSFA board member Rob Laws and former board member Bruce Maloney will also be involved with both events as will former Rams 21s coach Greg McGiskin.

SENIOR Youth League coach Brian Dene and Level 2 coach Blaise Fagan will be putting over 140 local coaches through a level 1 course over the next few months.

Both Brian and Blaise are also qualified Coerver coaches.

THE RAMS Easter Coaching Clinic was a huge success with over 70 boys and girls having a great time as well as improving their soccer skills under the direction of Brian Dene and first grade players Shayne Raner and Eric Williams and WSL coach Peter Davies and players from the Rams Apprenticeship Scheme.

ALL registered men's and women's senior players in the local competition will be receiving free passes to the next two Rams Saturday night fixtures as well as a free drink voucher and entry passes to Two Moon Junction nightclub and a 10% discount for dinner at Eschol Park House.

CAMDEN Tigers, a foundation member club of the MDSFA, have this year expanded into the junior representative area.

With the support of the MDSFA, Camden Tigers have entered the NSW Youth League division two competition and are performing very well.

On the senior front the Tigers have progressed from Division 5 in 1997 to Division 3 this season.

FORTY girls have commenced the MDSFA development programme.

They have been selected from local clubs in Under 10 and 12 age groups and will receive specialised coaching over a 10 week period from WSL coach Peter Davies and his staff.

It is a busy time in the female soccer programme with the start of their season also.

ESCHOL Park soccer club will be hosting a visit by the Rams first grade squad on Thursday.

Eschol Park is the largest club in the MDSFA with well over 70 teams.

Les Returns Serve

SJ: There are those who have said that Les Scheinflug is only in the job because Basil Scarsella is chairman of Soccer Australia and Tony Labbozzetta is on the board.

What is your response to that?

LS: "Maybe these people should get out of their glass houses and look at my record."

"Unfortunately if they do not look at my record then they are not recording all the facts, something I would have thought journalists must do."

SJ: What about those who say that the last five years of your record is poor?

LS: "I would say you have to take it all in perspective."

"When I started in the early 1980s we were not in the top eight and now, despite what happened in Nigeria, we are still ranked number seven."

"Have a look at the different preparations, though."

"David Hill did not

want to concentrate on youth football, his major focus was on the number one side, and that is where the money went."

"Even in John Constantine's final year in charge the money was starting to dry up for youth football."

"It's easy to say we have not done as well over the last three World Cups as we would have liked but compare the preparations."

"It used to be we had a camp every two months, and we had tours in Europe and South America together."

"In the last four years we have had two camps a year."

"All things considered you cannot expect better performances from a semi professional side."

"Yet despite this lack of money and preparation our youth system is still held up as a model by FIFA and that shows the respect they have for us in Australia."

"In many respects I am carrying the can for our performances, which as coach I do, but the lack of finances makes it difficult for anyone involved in the youth system in this country."

"It is not an excuse, it is just the facts."

SJ: Saying that about the youth system, there has been criticism from the NSL coaches that

"Maybe these people should get out of their glass houses and look at my record - if they do not look at my record then they are not recording all the facts"

the kids they get at NSL level are still having to be taught the basics of soccer."

Is this still a problem in Australia and if so how do we overcome it?

LS: "I certainly see that - really, coaches at this level should be just adding the finishing touches."

"Maybe we have to spend more money on quality youth coaches at a much younger age."

"It is of concern and hopefully we will look at this for the future, it would certainly help things at all levels, whether NSL, Under 17s,

Under 20s or whatever."

SJ: There has been criticism that you have not been a party to training someone else up to hand over to as national youth coach.

What is your response to that?

LS: "Well the fact is I have had Nick Theodorakopoulos, Adrian Santac, Branko Culina, Angie Postecoglou, Kelly Cross, Steve O'Connor and John Kosmina alongside me at different times."

"If somebody wants to learn about being a national team coach then I am more than happy to help in their development."

"That is because we all want to see soccer in Australia be as successful as it can be."

"There are requirements though, you can not simply jump into a job like this."

"Maybe these people should get out of their glass houses and look at my record - if they do not look at my record then they are not recording all the facts"

"You must have some experience, and be fairly successful."

"You must have a passion for the job and share the same sort of perspective about the game as I have."

"If you have this then things will work well together."

"Nick Theodorakopoulos has the most experience and has been successful, plus he has a great passion for the game - that is why he is helping me out in Fiji."

SJ: If you were not coach of the side could you see

Inside Soccer always speak to the big names. Last week STUART JONES was invited to interview LES SCHEINFLUG.

With the national youth coach being battered in some sections of the press the integrity of a newspaper which has become an even forum for all was again highlighted. For his part, Scheinflug was candid, open and forthright.

yourself in a more over-looking capacity, say as director of the youth system, or heading a major scouting system?

LS: "I can always see myself involved in the game."

"I love the game and am passionate about the game."

"However, saying that I will go when I feel the time

ing back to the game."

"This has always been my aim, to give back to Australian soccer all that it has given me."

SJ: It seems that the target of a lot of criticism in Australia is ex 1974 boys.

People are constantly

criticising yourself, Johnny Warren, Rale Rasic, Manfred Schaefer and the ilk, why is that?

LS: "I think a lot of it is the typical Australian tall poppy syndrome."

"You accept criticism, whether it is right or wrong, as long as it is constructive."

"I do have a problem when the criticism is a personal vendetta by one or two people and those trying to hang off their coat tails."

"As reporters they should be asking me for my opinion before they write their stories or

MY TEAM

If YOU would like your junior team featured here just send a current photograph to the address on page 3 - and include names of the players in the photograph.



DELROY HIGH SCHOOL, 1998



Les Scheinflug taking a blast at Kyle Patterson and SBS

spout their editorials. "Some who criticise me in the media I have never even met before, so how can their critiques be balanced?" "I accept criticism as long as it is constructive and helpful to the future of the game. "However, that criticism needs to come from

people who have done something for the game in this country, they are the words you can accept because they have been there and done that. "Consider my critics and ask the question, what have they done for soccer in Australia and how well do they know the game really? "If they can answer they have done a lot and are knowledgeable in their critiques then you can

take their opinions on board." SJ: You were involved in a very controversial episode of On the Ball on SBS when Kyle Patterson interviewed you. Would you be involved with the show again after that? LS: "I don't think so.

"I went there because I wanted to. "I thought I owed the channel that has done so much for soccer in Australia at least that much. "I went there to explain the reasons for Nigeria '99 but I felt I could not get them across. "I thought what Kyle did was bad. "Can you imagine any national coach getting the sort of grilling I got? "When we played New

Zealand a while back SBS were upset because they said that we would not do a post match interview but we were always willing to do interviews with them. Now I really have to reconsider this. "I personally think SBS and Kyle Patterson have a lot to answer for because of that performance on TV to soccer people around the country." SJ: So what went wrong in Nigeria? LS: "Sometimes we have good squads sometimes we have better squads, we had a good squad. "Our preparation was not as good because of the financial situation. "The boys were prepared in terms of fitness as many play in the NSL. "However, once we got

over there we were the only country who had to play all our games at 4pm, during all that heat, because of TV commitments.

"The likes of Vince Grella lost 4.6kgs during one match, and the same for other players, and then they had to be right again three days later.

"It simply has not happened in soccer before to that extent.

"Then look at the results, had the penalty been converted we may well have still been over there.

"For the Ireland game the boys were given instructions but people must remember they are only boys, they do make mistakes.

"They will learn and improve from them.

"We opened up play in the last quarter and conceded three goals only because we were chasing full points, we are not going to defend a 1-0 loss are we?

"After the match even the Irish coach said playing at 4pm was inhuman.

"None of these are excuses, they are facts.

"Too much training in Nigeria beforehand would have just dehydrated the boys even more.

"Overall, our preparation was not as good as in the past, perhaps the finances will be made available to improve the preparation for our national youth teams in the future now."

SJ: So what of the Under 17s, how will they go? LS: "You always have to be positive.

"In a sense we are going into unknown territory as they have not been away to these parts.

"They are going to hot temperatures and concrete fields.

"However, they are good players and I am sure they will go through."

Nick joins the Joeys

WOLLONGONG coach Nick Theodorakopoulos has joined the Australian coaching staff for the Under 17 World Cup soccer qualifiers which begin in Fiji next month.

The 34-year-old, who has been with Wollongong Wolves for the past three and a half years in the national league, joins NSW Institute of Sport head soccer coach Kelly Cross as an assistant coach to Les Scheinflug.

Scheinflug is keen to give an opportunity to more of the local coaches and believes the experience will be invaluable for Theodorakopoulos.

"It will be good for Nick to get this experience under his belt because the difference between international football and club football is huge. It's like night and day," the Joeys coach said.

Theodorakopoulos had previously coached the NSW Under 20s as well as having worked under Olympic coach Raul Blanco with the Olyroos.

"It's an absolute honour to be appointed for the tour. The experience is just going to be enormous and I'm look-

ing forward to working with Les and quality youth players again," he said.

"With the NSW Under 20s, Les held an overseeing position to watch my development as a coach.

"I was able to work with players like Brett Emerton, Clayton Zane and Ante Seric and this will be an opportunity to

do so again."

The Joeys are currently in camp at the NSW Soccer Federation headquarters before the selection is made of the final 18 players.

Australia has been drawn in Pool A of the Oceania qualifiers along with Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji, Cook Islands and American Samoa.



The Australian Under-17 Soccer team has arrived in Fiji, to continue preparations for the Oceania Under-17 Qualifying Competition. Coach Les Scheinflug will continue on from last week's camp at the NSW Soccer Federation to prepare the Joeys for their first game against Fiji on May 1.

Australia's draw is:

Saturday 1st May 1999: Australia Vs Fiji, Monday 3rd May 1999: Australia Vs Papua New Guinea, Wednesday 5th May 1999: Australia Vs Cook Islands, Friday 7th May 1999: Australia Vs American Samoa, Monday 10th May 1999: Australia Vs Vanuatu

AUSTRALIAN U-17 SQUAD for the Oceania qualifying in Fiji:

Matthew Milosevic, Radoslav Culibrk, Shane Cansdell-Sherriff, Aaron Goulding, Steven Laurie, Mark Byrnes, Jade North, Louis Brain, Joseph Diiorio, Lucas Pantelis, Scott McDonald, Shane Lockhart, Wayne Srhoj, James Johnson, Anthony Dolimanis, Fabian Lettieri, Dylan MacAllister, Jess Kedwell-Vanstrattan, Iain Fyfe, Mislav Saric.



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Osman, Tour, Duval and Thurlow head up AISA Academy

OVER the last two weekends the Australian Indoor Soccer (Five A Side) Association has been conducting representative trials for Australian teams to tour overseas later this year.

Over 400 players were invited to trial for both male and female teams from Unders 12s through to All Age.

The trials were held at the Fairfield Indoor Sports Centre where, with the help of Roy Perre, the three courts provided ample room to accommodate all players.

In 1998 the AISA sent six teams to Canada

where they had a very successful three week tour.

Also two NSW secondary School teams toured New Zealand for two weeks, a tour that will be repeated in July of this year.

In order to continue the development of these elite players, and to encourage coaches and managers to get more involved in Indoor Soccer at the grass roots level, AISA has formed a coaching academy in the NSWISF complex at Valentine Sports park, Glenwood.

The academy will be

responsible for the development of all players, coaches and managers, not only at elite standard but at club level as well.

The academy has appointed four development officers with many years experience in both coaching and representing Australia in Indoor Soccer.

Erkin Osman, Gilles Tour, Brett Duval and Bruce Thurlow will bring dedication, commitment and a wealth of knowledge about the game which will ensure the success of the coaching academy in the future.

The teams selected from the trials at Fairfield

will now go onto training at the academy in preparation for the overseas tours where the same success as the teams that toured Canada will undoubtedly be achieved.

In order for Indoor Soccer to continue to grow and realise its full potential, the development of its junior player at club level and above is a priority.

The AISA has long term goals and the forming of the coaching academy and appointment of its staff is just one of the steps put into place to achieve these goals.

ASICS BIG MATCH UPDATE: ERICSSON CUP ROUND 30

Francis makes it 5 in a row

By Anthony Raineri

STRIKER Francis Awaritefe celebrated his first National Soccer League match as Marconi captain by scoring the only goal in a 1-0 win over Northern Spirit at Marconi Stadium on Saturday.

Marconi, languishing mid-table less than two months ago, catapulted to fourth place after its fifth successive victory.

The two teams will meet again in a two-legged elimination semi-final, beginning at North Sydney Oval on Friday.

Awaritefe scored his 11th goal of the season and 113th of his career when he met a cross from striker Kris Trajanovski and outjumped his marker, former Marconi team-mate Luke Casserly to find the net.

"I was just happy to win," said Awaritefe, who was deputising for injured captain Brad Maloney. "The captaincy was a surprise to me. I only found out when I arrived at the ground. It was a 100 per cent effort all round. There were last-ditch tackles and players putting their bodies on the line."

Spirit's best chance to equalise came eight minutes from time when a bad bounce caused player-coach Graham Arnold to muffle a shot from close range with only the keeper to beat.

Spirit dominated territorially, although there were hardly any clear chances from either side in the first half.

Marconi finished the first half more strongly with a Brendan Renaud free-kick from outside the penalty box whistling past the crossbar.

Spirit's final first-half salvo came in injury time from young striker Daniel Watkins, whose flicking header just missed the crossbar.

Marconi coach Frank Farina said it was a magnificent victory but

played down the revenge factor after Spirit's 4-0 humiliation of the four-time champion in the first round.

"It's a big thing for the club to win but it wasn't a revenge thing for me," Farina said.

"I wanted to win to finish as high as possible on the points table."

Arnold said he was "pretty happy" with his team considering he had made six changes to last week's line up.

"We treated it as a semi-final game and we lost 1-0 away, which is not a bad result," he said.

"We'll try to get a better result this week."

Marconi utility Chad Gibson will be suspended after receiving a yellow card in the 68th minute.



Marconi coach Frank Farina: ready to take on Spirit again in the Top 6

MARCONI FAIRFIELD 1 (Awaritefe)
NORTHERN SPIRIT 0
 Venue: Marconi Stadium
 Man of the Match: Francis Awaritefe MARC

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ASICS BIG MATCH UPDATE: ERICSSON CUP ROUND 30

Tobin snatches late winner in finals blow

By Hannibal Rossi

SOCCEEROO captain Alex Tobin headed in a dramatic late winner as Adelaide City beat Sydney Olympic 1-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium on Sunday to snatch the last Ericsson Cup finals berth from its grasp.

City struggled to wear down Olympic's uncompromising, five-man defence until Tobin looped in the 83rd minute header over a ruck of defenders and Olympic keeper George Bouhoutos.

Tobin's third goal of the season saw City displace Olympic in sixth place, ensuring it would contest its 10th consecutive finals campaign after Olympic looked reasonably comfortable for most of the match.

City now faces Perth in a home and away, elimination finals clash.

Socceroo keeper Jason Petkovic ensured there would be no late sting in Olympic's tail with a first class stop to deny Ante Juric in the tense last seconds as the home side

**ADELAIDE CITY 1 (Tobin)
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 0**
Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium
Man of the Match: Nick Sabljak ADLC

poured forward in desperate attack.

City only dented the Olympic defence after teenage midfielder Nick Sabljak penetrated with a surging run and shot in the 83rd minute which Bouhoutos just turned round his post for a corner.

But this proved the crucial break with Tobin finding space in crowded penalty area to head City into the finals, despite carrying a groin injury.

Relieved Adelaide City coach Zoran Matic said he'd almost lost hope.

"I thought the goal was never going to happen. We were far too nervous on the ball tonight," he said.

"I hope we play a lot better in next week's final match."

It was only City's second win in six games but its 12th clean sheet of the season, the highest in the league this sea-

son.

Olympic opened brightly with Olyroo captain Brett Emerton latching onto a pass from Peter Zorbas in the second minute but sprayed his shot just wide.

But City started to peg back the Olympic midfield with Nick Sabljak providing excellent drive along with Dongi-Ki Kim who was sent on to replace Travis Dodd on the left after just 34 minutes in an effort to contain Emerton.

Kim drove a 20 metre volley just over the crossbar in the 38th minute.

Milan Ivanovic and Tobin kept a tight leash on leading NSL marksman Pablo Cardozo though the latter set up Emerton on a quick break in the 48th minute which the Olyroo skipper skied over the crossbar in the penalty area.

Damian Mori gave City fans



Photo by Carlos Furtardo

Alex Tobin: the Ad City skipper sent the Hindmarsh fans into delirium with his late header

hope with a back-header from a Mennillo free kick in the 68th minute but Olympic looked to have done enough to

grab its first finals spot in three years until Tobin struck. Peter Tsekenis and Scott Baillie were both cautioned

late as Olympic got on referee Eddie Lennie's case after the goal.

That missing ROUND 29 Match Report

McLaren heads Brisbane in front

By Sam Lienert

BRISBANE forwards Andy Harper and Stuart McLaren set up a 2-1 win over the Adelaide Sharks in a low-standard national soccer league match at Hindmarsh Stadium.

With neither side a chance to make the finals with one match remaining, both teams played without great passion.

After a lacklustre and error-ridden start to the match, the Sharks' Richie Alagich opened the scoring in the 22nd minute with a moment of individual brilliance.

Midfielder Branko Milosevic set up the forward thrust with an intercept near the centre of the pitch then Alagich struck a fierce right-footer from just inside the box which keeper Clint Bolton

deflected slightly, but not enough to clear it from the goal.

But the Strikers hit back with two goals to McLaren in four minutes - beautifully set up by experienced forward Harper.

Harper delivered a perfect curling cross from just outside the front of the box, which looped over several defenders and just out of reach of keeper Nathan Wildy, allowing McLaren to head it comfortably into the left of the net.

He followed minutes later with an almost identical play which McLaren this time headed into the right corner of the goal to give his side a 2-1 lead 34 minutes into the match.

Harper was again the architect of what should have been

McLaren's hat-trick in the final minute of the first half when he made an incisive pass to Kasey Werhman, about two metres from goal on the left post, which drew Wildy out of position.

Wehrman, who also had a strong game, chipped it back to McLaren in front of a wide open goal with no defenders in reach, but amazingly McLaren knocked the ball into the right post before falling to the ground in disbelief.

The Sharks failed to mount any serious challenge on the Strikers' lead in the second half, seemingly going through the motions in what could be the club's last ever home match. The Sharks appear likely to fold at the end of the season with the club recently appointing a financial administrator to cope with a massive debt and most players are set to desert the club after playing without match payments for the last half of the season.

**ADELAIDE SHARKS 1 (Alagich)
BRISBANE STRIKERS 2 (McLaren 2)**
Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium
Man of the Match: Stuart McLaren BRIS

Dull game heralds end of season for Cosmos

By Graham Cooke

CANBERRA Cosmos ended a grim national soccer league season on a low note, when the club's most experienced player, Amarildo Miglietti, was carried off with a suspected broken ankle against Gippsland Falcons at Bruce Stadium on Saturday.

The injury, coming at the end of an uninspiring goalless draw between the teams occupying the bottom two positions on the table, brought the curtain down on a season both will want to forget.

Often during the season Portuguese import Miglietti was the only player standing between Canberra and an embarrassing thrashing, and once again tonight he marshalled the defence to deny the Falcons a single worthwhile shot.

Gippsland's best effort came late in the game, former Cosmos striker Marko Perinovic going close with a header.

Earlier the best chances of the match had fallen to Canberra.

**CANBERRA COSMOS 0
GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0**
Venue: Bruce Stadium
Man of the Match: Amarildo Miglietti CANB

In the first half a neat move involving Gabriel Gonzales and Ivo de Jesus ended in Leo Langone's shot being pushed around the post by goalkeeper Bojo Jevdjovic.

On the hour, a fine run by Young Socceroo defender Lindsay Wilson ended in his shot being kicked off the line by Levant Osman.

Gippsland coach Stuart Munro said it seemed as if his players were already thinking about their holidays.

"It's our fifth draw in a row, and while with some of the other games I could say we were unlucky not to win, I can hardly say that with this one," he said.

"I have not seen some of my players play so badly as they did in the first half.

"I made some substitutions in the second half and that livened things up a little."

Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni thought the odds were always going to be against this type of fixture providing an inspiring game.

"It had its moments, but so badly needed a goal," he said.

"We created some reasonable chances in the first half, but Gippsland was the stronger finisher and we lost a bit of discipline."

AND in other Cosmos news star players Lindsay Wilson and Peter Buljan are on the verge of heading overseas for trials.

Wilson, the star Aussie in Nigeria '99, is unable to obtain a work visa to play in Britain but seems set to try his luck in Europe.

Sacked former skipper Norman Kelly will shortly go back to Northern Ireland while Gordon Hunter is likely to spend the break in Iceland.

ASICS BIG MATCH UPDATE: ERICSSON CUP ROUND 30

Glory grab late equaliser at Brandon Park

by Mike Driscoll

NSL TITLE contender Perth Glory led twice but needed a late equaliser from substitute Craig Deans to salvage a 3-3 draw against Wollongong Wolves at Brandon Park on Sunday.

Perth led 1-0 and 2-1 at half-time through John Markovski's double strike but trailed 3-2 before Dean's equaliser nine minutes from full time.

Wollongong, though well out of play-off contention would consider itself unlucky not to claim its ninth victory of the season in its final game.

Perth heads into next

weekend's Top Six play-offs in third spot while Wollongong finished tenth.

A spirited Wolves performance was soured in the final minute with second half substitute Esala Masi sent off for a late challenge.

Perth coach Bernd Stange used the final round match to rest several key players with the Glory assured of making the play-offs.

His team went into the game with a slim chance of finishing second and gaining a double chance provided it won and second-placed Sydney United lost to the Adelaide Sharks, but, as it

turned out, United blocked that avenue with a 3-1 win which secured the league premiership.

In an entertaining match, Perth made the best possible start with Markovski scoring after just 13 minutes.

The talented striker was making his comeback from injury and bobbed up to score with a neat header from just two metres after Perth had two shots blocked by some desperate Wollongong defence.

It took the Wolves just eight minutes to equalise through striker Ray Younis, slamming home a half volley from the edge of the penalty area

after a fine cross by Michael Brooks.

Markovski gave the Glory a 2-1 lead on 30 minutes with a glancing near post header from a Troy Halpin corner.

Wollongong equalised just three minutes after half-time through midfielder Sasho Dimoski and went in front 3-2 with a fine goal from Scott Chipperfield.

The Wolves looked set to seal victory but wasted a number of good chances before Deans rescued a point for the Glory.

Wollongong skipper Matt Horsley was inspirational down the right flank while Chipperfield was a constant menace.

For the Glory, Markovski though short of match condition looked sharp while goal keeper Danny Milosevic made a number of important saves.

WOLLONGONG CITY 3 (Younis, Dimoski, Chipperfield)
PERTH GLORY 3 (Markovski 2, Deans)
Venue: Brandon Park
Man of the Match: Matt Horsley WOLL

Knights finish on a high

by Alan Clark

THERE was a surreal atmosphere to this match - keenly fought out by the players of both sides at least for the first half, and of interest to the respective teams' supporters - but the focus was really elsewhere at other grounds around the nation.

Many at the ground were as interested in the outcome of a match 800 kilometres away between a Sydney side and an Adelaide one as they were in the game being played out in front of them.

Everyone knew that regardless of the result here, neither side could finish above tenth in the fifteen-team league, and the outcome would have no bearing on the shape of the Finals Series.

The match was effectively the last contractual playing

obligation for this year for both Melbourne Knights and Carlton, and a sad end to seasons both sides and their supporters would have expected more from.

It would be a test of pride, a last opportunity for both teams to give their respective sets of fans hope for a better season next time around, and - for some players - a final chance to impress their clubs' committees deliberating which players to retain and which to discard.

There was action which brought three goals - all very skilfully despatched - which arose in the first half, and so there seemed promise for more of the same following the interval.

But as it happened, Carlton's opening goal from returned Young Socceroo star Simon Colosimo who bent a 20 metre

shot past a startled Martin John in the sixth minute, and Knights' equally skilful equaliser by Ante Kovacevic nine minutes later, followed by the Knights taking the lead through Ivan Jolic midway through the half was to be the end of the scoring action.

All three goals would have adorned a game where the stakes were greater - Colosimo's came out of nothing as the Knights' defence backed off, allowing him to send in a left-foot shot which found the net to the surprise of all but the Carlton youngster.

As if to show that two can play that game, Knights equalised after Kutlesovski bent one around Dean Anastasiadis from equal distance but to greater acclaim.

What proved to be the winner was also worthy of a place in the season's list of better goals.

Ransford Banini - seemingly playing with an injury that considerably reduced his mobility, made good progress up the left as Carlton defenders conceded ground, sending



Simon Colosimo: Carlton's lone sorer as their season finished depressingly

forward a perfect through-ball to the hard-running Tom Pondeljak.

Pondeljak squared to Ivan Jolic who blasted home from outside the area.

The second-half paled by comparison, perhaps due to the players of both sides altering the focus of their attentions to post-season activities.

Certainly Zeljko Susa's attention drifted as he made his run-up to take an injury-time penalty resulting from a foul by returning Knights' old-boy and current Carlton captain Andrew Marth.

Susa's shot hit the base of the post and rebounded clear.

Knights' coach Josip Biskic said that he'd spoken with the

players before the game to mention that a win was to be important for the club.

"Because it was our last game, winning it to finish the season well was our aim," he said.

"When I took over (midway through the season after the resignation of Vid Horvat), I said our goal was to finish above three clubs at least - Canberra Cosmos, Gippsland Falcons, and Adelaide Sharks.

"We've done it.

"At least we've done something this season."

Carlton coach Eddie Krncevic took some time locked in the rooms with his players before he was able to speak to the media.

When he came out, shortly after Carlton General Manager had departed the area grimaced, Krncevic was careful in his choice of words, outlining Carlton's plans for the future, but being unspecific about whether he was likely to be part of it.

When asked where he fitted in to those plans, he said: "I don't know yet."

"I'm not too sure."

We're all disappointed to finish the year off like that.

"It's been a disappointing second half of the season for us. "We're missing a little bit of quality and we need to bolster up those areas for next season."

Controversy ends Kossie's Brisbane season

by Glenn Davies

A controversial penalty steered Newcastle Breakers to an upset 2-1 win over Brisbane Strikers at Suncorp Stadium on Sunday as both teams completed their national soccer league season short of the play-offs.

The Strikers, who led 1-0 at half-time, looked in complete control and headed for a well deserved win until referee Jeff Tippert changed the complexion of the game with two controversial rulings.

Tippert awarded Newcastle a penalty in the 76th minute after ruling Strikers goalkeeper Danny Duke had brought down Newcastle striker John Buonavoglia on the corner of the box.

Many at the ground clearly believed Duke, playing his first Ericsson Cup match, had taken the ball cleanly from Buonavoglia's feet and the striker had "dived".

BRISBANE STRIKERS 1 (Harper)
NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 2 (Pryce, Ritchie)
Venue: Suncorp Stadium
Man of the Match: Stuart McLaren BRIS

Defender Shane Pryce stepped up and hammered the spot kick past Duke's outstretched left hand. Pryce's goal cancelled out the Strikers half-time 1-0 lead earned with one of the team's best moves of the season.

Midfielder Kasey Wehrman played a long ball to forward Stu McLaren who's first time lay-off fell perfectly for striker Andy Harper to drive home from inside the box.

Newcastle, which rarely threatened for three quarters of the match, took a shock lead two minutes after its equaliser when substitute Peter Ritchie tapped in from close range to finish off a low cross from Glenn Spord.

Referee Tippert was heckled soon after New-

castle hit the front when he failed to award the Strikers a penalty when Wehrman appeared to be brought down in the box.

Strikers coach John Kosmina has now lost twice this season against his former club.

"I was happy with the way we played and we certainly were not outplayed," Kosmina said.

Kosmina came to Newcastle from Brisbane at the start of the season on a two year agreement, but rumours emanating from south of the border this week had him on shaky ground for next season. However, Strikers general manager Ray Evans said Kosmina's position was not in question, saying the speculation was mere mischief-making from southerners.

ASICS BIG MATCH UPDATE: ERICSSON CUP ROUND 30

Lap of honour and champagne spray as United celebrate League win

By Ted Simmons

AN ELATED Sydney United coach David Mitchell was presented with the league premiership trophy on Sunday after his team wrapped up the National Soccer League season with a 3-1 win over Adelaide Sharks.

Mitchell once again proved wrong the critics who had written off his team's chances at the

now go ahead and win the Grand Final."

"Holding the trophy was an emotional time and taking out the minor premiership after all the problems we had was a fairytale."

United charged into action from the opening whistle and allowed Adelaide few chances in the first half.

David Barrett, praised by Mitchell as the outstanding player, showed

Stojovski an unexpected double.

Alex Kuzmanovic missed a clearance, keeper Nathan Wildy and Stojovski jumped for the bouncing ball which then hit defender Branko Milosevic and fell in front of Stojovski, who rifled his second chance into the net.

Burns made it 3-0 after a slick passing sequence four minutes later.

Adelaide scored six

SYDNEY UNITED 3 (Stojovski 2, Burns)
ADELAIDE SHARKS 1 (Mourtzidis)
Venue: Edensor Park
Man of the Match: David Barrett SUTD

start of the season.

A double to Australian youth international Mile Stojovski and another goal from Jacob Burns sent the club's biggest crowd of the season into rapture. A lap of honour in front of the 8,142 fans and a champagne spray reflected the side's joy at achieving the trophy over season front-runner South Melbourne, who finished one point behind.

"We had a great first half performance and it was worthy of a premier. I can't praise the players enough," Mitchell said.

"This is one trophy out of the way and we can

his usual touch on the right flank with two early crosses being headed unsuccessfully by Nathan Day.

Any hopes of victory by the Sharks disappeared in a 13-minute spell with the double by Stojovski and the touch by Burns.

Walter Ardone orchestrated the first with a 20th minute free kick from 30 metres which went from Velimir Kupresak to Barrett to Stojovski, whose shot was deflected into the net off defender Joel Porter.

Nine minutes later, a second defensive blunder by Adelaide gave Stojovski

minutes into the second half through Elias de Mourtzidis.

The Sharks had the two best chances in the second half when Alex Castro volleyed high and then headed wide with 'keeper Mike Gibson beaten both times.

Mitchell brought on his three substitutes in the closing 20 minutes to relieve the pressure on his key players who were down to walking after a non-stop effort.

The team will now have a few days break before preparing for its semi-final against South Melbourne in three weeks.



Going places: the Sydney United coaching duo of Lawrie McKinna and Davie Mitchell

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE ROUND-UP

With Roy Hay

CARLTON overwhelmed Bulleen Inter by six goals to nil at Anderson Reserve on Saturday.

Bulleen's resistance fell apart after Nathan Thomas was sent off for his second bookable offence in the first half.

Deniz Ekici scored a hat-trick, two came from Tony Ouliaris and Serdar Pir got the other.

Carlton was already confirmed as Minor Premier before this game.

The Victorian Institute of Sport beat Bulleen three-one last Wednesday in another of its series of catch-up games.

Angelo Motsiopoulos, Denis Vucinic and David Terek scored for the VIS, while Michael Gulino replied for Bulleen.

Then on Saturday the VIS went to Myrtleford and despite having several players injured and unavailable beat Albion Wodonga by five goals to nil.

Ray Sekulovski scored twice, Marc Tsiorlas, Denis Vucinic and David Terek scored the others.

The match between the VIS and South Melbourne on Tuesday will decide who plays Carlton next week for the first

place in the Grand Final.

The loser of that match will play Gippsland Falcons.

Gippsland Falcons overwhelmed the Melbourne Knights at Knights Stadium to the tune of five goals to nil.

Alex Halikias was the star with four goals and Billy Mitroulas scored the other.

This result puts the Falcons into the play-offs as Bulleen is six points behind with two games in hand, but with a much inferior goal difference.

The Northern Division play-off places were not

decided until the very last game in Round 30 between Marconi Fairfield and Northern Spirit on Sunday night. In the end the Spirit prevailed, winning by three goals to one after going behind to a Mark Haggard penalty after 53 minutes.

Knowing that they were certain of a spot in the play-offs the Spirit could afford to play a counter-attacking game and this paid off when Ryan Griffiths scored twice on the break in 67 and 77 minutes. Anthony Kanaan got the third goal in the 80th minute.

So Marconi missed out and the Breakers hung on to the last play-off spot.

Marconi Fairfield Colts held second top team Sydney Olympic to a scoreless draw on Saturday at home. Olympic and the AIS, which won the league by four points, will play off for a spot in the Northern Division Grand Final next week.

The loser will play the winner of the other semi-final which will be either Northern Spirit or Newcastle.

Newcastle Breakers had a good two-nil win over Wollongong Wolves last

Wednesday with goals by John Buonavoglia in 26 minutes and Brendan Wiecek in 79. Then it went to Brisbane and scored a two-one win over the QAS.

This result lifted Newcastle to fourth spot on goal difference, but still at that stage dependent on the outcome of the final match.

ACTAS downed Northern Spirit Colts by two goals to nil scored by Luke Morgan in 40 minutes and Grant Chick in 53.

Wollongong Wolves had a six-two win over

Sydney United Colts, while Sydney United downed the Wolves Colts by five goals to nil.

For the Wolves Youth the scorers were George Mahanidis with two and singles to Kane Macca-bei, Paul Tuturevski and Chad Bishop, while Les Pogliacomi scored a penalty kick.

The United Colts goals came from Gustavo Orcajo and Monte Pfrengle. Sydney Youth's scorers were David Pavelic with goals in 66 and 69 minutes, Daniel Kukucka in 76, Josip Moric in 78 and Alan Lo Proto in 89.

SCOREBOARD

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Central Coast 1
Newcastle Breakers 2
Macarthur Rams 1
Blacktown City 4
Manly Warringah 2
Wollongong Wolves 2

Parramatta Eagles 0,
Sydney United 0,
Southern Districts 1,
Eastern Suburbs 0,
Marconi Fairfield 1,
Sutherland Sharks 0.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE:

UNDER 13:

Canterbury Marrickville 4 Fairfield Bulls 2
St George v. Bankstown Association W/O
Blacktown Association 0 Ryde City 0
AC United 6
Hills United 1
Rockdale City 1

Canterbury Assoc 0
Stanmore Hawks 0
Penrith Panthers 0

UNDER 14:

Canterbury Marrickville 1 Fairfield Bulls 0
St George v. Bankstown Association W/O
Ryde City 2
AC United 2
Hills United 3
Penrith Panthers 4

Blacktown Association 0
Canterbury Assoc 0
Stanmore Hawks 2
Rockdale City 1

UNDER 15:

Canterbury Marrickville 3 Fairfield Bulls 1
St George v. Bankstown Association W/O,
Blacktown Association 2 Ryde City 2
AC United 6
Stanmore Hawks 2
Penrith Panthers 5

Canterbury Assoc 0
Hills United 1
Rockdale City 1

UNDER 16:

Canterbury Marrickville 1 Fairfield Bulls 0
St George v. Bankstown Association W/O
Blacktown Association 1 Ryde City 1
Canterbury Assoc 3
Stanmore Hawks 2
Rockdale City 3

AC United 0
Hills United 0
Penrith Panthers 2

DIVISION TWO YOUTH LEAGUE:

UNDER 13:

Nepean Association 0
Macquarie Sports 2
Mt Pritchard 1
CSI Schofields 1
Ku-ring-gai Assoc 2
Hajduk Wanderers 2

Hawkesbury City 0
Camden Tigers 0
Granville Association 0,
Moorebank Sports 0
Mt Druitt Town 1
Parramatta City 1

UNDER 14:

Nepean Association 4
Camden Tigers 0
Granville Assoc 2
CSI Schofields 5
Mt Druitt Town 1
Hajduk Wanderers 3

Hawkesbury City 1, Cam-
den Tigers 0,
Mt Pritchard 2
Moorebank Sports 0
Ku-ring-gai Assoc 0
Parramatta City 0.

UNDER 15:

Hawkesbury City 2
Macquarie Sports 1
Mt Pritchard 3
CSI Schofields 3
Ku-ring-gai Association 3
Parramatta City 3

Nepean Association 1,
Camden Tigers 0
Granville Association 2,
Moorebank Sports 2
Mt Druitt Town 1
Hajduk Wanderers 2.

UNDER 16:

Nepean Association 5
Camden Tigers 1
Granville Association 1
Moorebank Sports 2
Mt Druitt Town 3
Parramatta City 2

Hawkesbury City 0,
Macquarie Sports 0,
Mt Pritchard 1,
CSI Schofields 1
Ku-ring-gai Association 0,
Hajduk Wanderers 0

CADET LEAGUE DIVISION TWO:

UNDER 11:

Hawkesbury City 2
Hawkesbury City 4

Mt Pritchard 1
Mt Pritchard 0.

UNDER 12:

Hawkesbury City 4

QUEENSLAND

QUEENSLAND PREMIER LEAGUE

Brisbane City 1
Toowoomba United 0
Mt Gravatt 1
Rosedale Rovers 3
Taringa Rovers

Ipswich Knights 1
Gold Coast 0
Brisbane Lions 4
Bundaberg Waves 2
Wynnum 2

DIVISION 1 NORTH

Grange Thistle 0
Albany Creek 1
Eastern Suburbs 2
North Star 4

Pine Rivers 3
Mitchelton 1
Uni of Qld 0
The Gap 0

DIVISION 1 SOUTH

Slacks Creek 5
Redlands United 1

Inala City 2
Acacia Ridge 3

Olympic United 0
Beenleigh: bye
Souths 1

Rocklea United 3
Capalaba 0

VICTORIA

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

South Dandenong 2
Membti
Villani

Port Melbourne 2
Caimakamis
Palamaras

Fawkner Blues 3
Tramontana
Psarros
Simsek

Susnhine Gerogies 0

Bentleigh Greens 6

Michail
Nilo
Drakos
Pappetta 2
Pino

Altona East 0

Preston Lions 4
Sismek
Emsovski

Springvale 1

Westvale 0

Bulleen Inter Kings 1
Rusmir

WEST AUSTRALIA

SOCCER WEST COAST PREMIER LEAGUE

First Grade
Bayswater City 4
Inglewood Falcons 3
Ashfield Bunbury 3
Sorrento 7
Joondalup 5
Western Knights 2

Stirling Lions 0
Perth Sc 0
Kingsway Olympic 0
Cockburn City 2
Floreath Athena 2
Fremantle City 3

Second Grade

Bayswater City 6
Inglewood Falcons 0
Ashfield Bunbury 2
Sorrento 2
Joondalup 1
Western Knights 0

Stirling Lions 0
Perth Sc 2
Kingsway Olympic 1
Cockburn City 2
Floreath Athena 1
Fremantle City 5

Under 18s

Bayswater City 4
Inglewood Falcons 6
Ashfield Bunbury 2
Sorrento 2
Joondalup 1
Western Knights 0

Stirling Lions 3
Perth Sc 1
Kingsway Olympic 1
Cockburn City 2
Floreath Athena 1
Fremantle City 5

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Canberra Cosmos 0
Venue: Bruce Stadium
Crowd: 1,666
Referee: M Breeze
Cautions: A Vargas (GF) 25'; C Canosa (GF) 53'; J Hopkins (GF) 60'; G Gonzalez (CC) 72'

Brisbane Strikers 1
A Harper 40'

Newcastle Breakers 2
S Pryce pen 77
P Ritchie 78

Venue: Suncorp Stadium

Crowd: 3,463
Referee: J Tippet
Cautions: D Duke (BS) 76'; N Meredith (BS) 88'

Wollongong City 3
R Younis 20
S Dimoski 47
S Chipperfield 61

Perth Glory 3
J Markovski 13, 29
C Deans 81

Venue: Brandon Park

Crowd: 3,213
Referee: M Shield
Cautions: V Kalogeracos (PG) 72'; J Harnwell (PG) 77'
Red Card: E Masi (WW) 88'

Sydney United 2
M Sterjovski 20, 29
J Burns 33

Adelaide Sharks 1
(E Demourtzidis 50)

Venue: Edensor Park

Crowd: 8,142
Referee: E Brazzale
Cautions: C Artone (AS) 65'

Adelaide City 1
A Tobin 83
Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium

Sydney Olympic 0



Crowd: 5,367
Referee: E Lennie
Cautions: M Durakovic (SO) 39'; P Cardozo (SO) 70'; D Mori (AC) 79'; D Menillo (AC) 83'; S Bailie (SO) 83'; P Tsekenis (SO) 85

Melbourne Knights 2
I Kutlesovski 14
I Jolic 24

Carlton 1
S Colosimo 5

Venue: Knights Stadium
Crowd: 4,063
Referee: J Blaney
Cautions: A Kovacevic (MK) 57'; Z Susa (MK) 76'; L Lapsansky (CSC) 76'

Marconi Fairfield 1
F Awaritefe 30
Venue: Marconi Stadium
Crowd: 10,117
Referee: G Connolly
Cautions: C Gibson (MF) 68'; P Bilokapic (NS) 74'

LEADING SCORERS
Pablo Cardozo - Sydney Olympic 18
Brad Maloney - Marconi 16

Mile Sterjovski - Sydney United 16
Damian Mori - Adelaide City 14
Vaughan Coveny - South Melbourne 13
Alex Moreira - Carlton 12
Michael Curcija - South Melbourne 12

NAT YOUTH LEAGUE

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE:

Northern Division: Round 27:
Newcastle Breakers 2
Round 30:
Marconi Fairfield Colts 0
Newcastle Breakers 2
ACTAS 2
Wollongong Wolves 6
Sydney United 5
Southern Division:
Round 28:
VIS 3
Round 30:
Carlton 6
Gippsland Falcons 5
VIS 5

Wollongong Wolves 0,
Sydney Olympic 0
QAS 1
Spirit Colts 0
Sydney United Colts 2
Wolves Colts 0

Bulleen Inter 1

Bulleen Inter 0
Melbourne Knights 0
Albury Wodonga 0

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FIRST STAGE

GROUP A

03-04-99	Lagos	Nigeria 1	Costa Rica 1
04-04-99	Lagos	Germany 4	Paraguay 0
07-04-99	Lagos	Nigeria 2	Germany 0
07-04-99	Lagos	Costa Rica 1	Paraguay 3
10-04-99	Lagos	Nigeria 1	Paraguay 2
10-04-99	Lagos	Costa Rica 2	Germany 1

GROUP B

04-04-99	Kaduna	Ghana 1	Croatia 1
04-04-99	Kaduna	Argentina 1	Kazakhstan 0
07-04-99	Kaduna	Ghana 1	Argentina 0
07-04-99	Kaduna	Croatia 5	Kazakhstan 1
10-04-99	Kaduna	Ghana 3	Kazakhstan 0
10-04-99	Kaduna	Croatia 0	Argentina 0

GROUP C

04-04-99	Ibadan	Australia 3	Saudi Arabia 1
04-04-99	Ibadan	Mexico 1	Ireland 0
07-04-99	Ibadan	Australia 1	Mexico 3
07-04-99	Ibadan	Saudi Arabia 0	Ireland 2
10-04-99	Ibadan	Australia 0	Ireland 4
10-04-99	Ibadan	Saudi Arabia 1	Mexico 1

GROUP D

05-04-99	Enugu	Uruguay	Mali 2
05-04-99	Enugu	Korea 1	Portugal 3
08-04-99	Enugu	Uruguay 1	Korea Republic 0
08-04-99	Enugu	Mali 2	Portugal 1
11-04-99	Enugu	Uruguay 0	Portugal 0
11-04-99	Enugu	Mali 2	Korea Republic 4

GROUP E

05-04-99	Kano	Cameroon 2	Japan 1
05-04-99	Kano	England 0	United States 1
08-04-99	Kano	Cameroon 1	England 0
08-04-99	Bauchi	Japan 3	United States 1
11-04-99	Bauchi	Cameroon	United States 3
11-04-99	Bauchi	Japan 2	England 0

GROUP F

05-04-99	Calabar	Zambia 4	Honduras 3
05-04-99	Calabar	Spain 2	Brazil 0
08-04-99	Calabar	Zambia 0	Spain 0
08-04-99	Port Harcourt	Honduras 0	Brazil 3
11-04-99	Port Harcourt	Zambia 1	Brazil 5
11-04-99	Port Harcourt	Honduras 1	Spain 3

SECOND STAGE

ROUND OF 16

14-04-99	Kano	Ireland 1	Nigeria 1*
14-04-99	Kaduna	Ghana 2	Costa Rica 0
14-04-99	Lagos	Paraguay 2	Uruguay 2*
14-04-99	Calabar	Brazil 4	Croatia 0
15-04-99	Bauchi	Japan 1*	Portugal 1
15-04-99	Port Harcourt	Spain 3	United States 2
15-04-99	Ibadan	Mexico 4	Argentina 1
15-04-99	Enugu	Mali 5#	Cameroon 4

QUARTERFINALS

18-04-99	Lagos	Uruguay 2	Brazil 1
18-04-99	Enugu	Mali 3	Nigeria 1
18-04-99	Ibadan	Japan 2	Mexico 0
18-04-99	Kaduna	Spain 1*	Ghana 1

SEMIFINALS

21-03-99	Kaduna	Spain 3	Mali 1
21-04-99	Lagos	Japan 2	Uruguay 1

THIRD PLACE

24-04-99	Lagos	Uruguay 0	Mali 1
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FINAL

24-04-99	Lagos	Spain 4	Japan 0
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won with Golden Goal
* won on penalties



Spain crush underdogs

By Brian Homewood

PABLO Gonzalez scored twice as Spain crushed Japan 4-0 to win the World Youth Cup for the first time on Saturday.

Gonzalez, who plays for second division club Numancia, finished as the tournament's joint leading scorer with five goals alongside Mali's Mahamadou Dissa.

Underdog Japan, missing injured captain Shinji Ono, was never in the hunt after Saludes Barkero drilled a free kick through its defensive wall in the fifth minute. Gonzalez scored in the 14th and 30th minutes.

Gabriel Garcia de la Torre added a fourth early in the second half, converting a chance brilliantly set up by fellow Barcelona reserve Xavier Hernandez.

After that Japan was happy to keep the score down.

Spain, whose players are nearly all reserves with first and second division clubs, dominated the game and could have been further

ahead by the interval but for two timely saves by goalkeeper Yuta Minami.

"Spain are a beautiful team and they thoroughly deserved to win," said Japan coach Philippe Troussier.

However, Troussier was unhappy with the free kick awarded against Minami inside the penalty area from which Spain opened the scoring.

"At this age level it was a very rigid decision and the whole game turned on it," he said.

The Frenchman said he was delighted to have taken his team of underdogs so far.

"Today we had only two players who play in the first division. The others play with university teams or reserve teams."

Earlier the competition's other surprise package Mali took third place by beating Uruguay 1-0, its second win over the South Americans in the tournament.

"This is the biggest moment in the history of football in Mali," said jubilant coach Mahamadou Coulibaly.

SEMI FINAL ACTION

Varela's double help Spain while underdogs Japan also win through to youth final

STRIKER Ramos Varela scored twice to help Spain beat Mali 3-1 on Wednesday to earn a place in the World Youth Cup final.

Varela drove in a low shot after just two minutes to finish off a brilliant exchange of passes involving five Spaniards.

The Real Ectis forward made it 2-0 in the 26th minute, tucking in Gabriel Garcia's low cross as the Europeans took charge.

The Malians, from the poverty-stricken country in the sub-Saharan region, lacked the confidence and cohesion they

exhibited earlier in the tournament, especially when beating hosts Nigeria in the quarter-finals.

They did pull one back in the 52nd minute when striker Mahamadou Dissa, fired in a rocket from the edge of the area for his fifth goal of the tournament.

But Spain ensured their place in the final when Xavier Hernandez scored in the last minute.

AND underdogs Japan continued their amazing run in the World Youth Cup on Wednesday as they beat Uruguay 2-1

to reach the final.

"I'm very proud of my team. Of course I didn't expect to get this far," said Japan coach Philippe Troussier, who last year performed a similar feat by taking minnows Burkina Faso to the semifinals of the African Nations Cup.

Troussier, known as the "white witchdoctor", also coaches Japan's senior team.

Yuichiro Nagai scored Japan's winner in the 35th minute, tricking a defender with a cheeky dummy and then firing the ball into the net.

Naohiro Takahara had given

Japan a 23rd minute lead but Ernesto Chevanton equalised a minute later with his fourth goal of the competition.

Japan defended in depth in the second half but Uruguay, who base their game on sitting back and frustrating the opposition with large amounts of gamesmanship, lacked the creativity to break down the opposing defence.

Japan took a leaf out of Uruguay's book as they had three players booked for time-wasting including captain Shinji Ono, who will miss the final through suspension.



Keita takes award

Mali's Seydou Keita was today voted the best player of the FIFA World Youth Championship by journalists.

Keita was a key player for Mali, the surprise team of the competition who finished third.

Nigeria's Pius Ikedia won the "silver boot" of the competition and Spain's Pablo Gonzalez, who scored twice in the final, the bronze.

Croatia won the FIFA Fair Play award.

The Croatians, ousted in the second round by Brazil, were voted by FIFA officials for the award, followed by Ghana and United States.

Blatter admits to reservations over Youth Cup

By Brian Homewood

FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who heaped lavish praise on Nigerian organisers of the World Youth Cup earlier in the tournament, admitted on Thursday he was not entirely happy with the way things he had gone.

Blatter said crowds had been disappointing while telecommunications and air travel arrangements had not been up to scratch.

The competition went ahead despite reservations about the ability of Africa's most populous nation to stage it.

"If there have been some shortcomings, they must be

mentioned otherwise I would not be honest with FIFA, I would not be honest with myself and I would not be honest with you (the media)," he said.

"The telecommunications system must be improved, we have witnessed that it is difficult to call from one town to the other."

"I was told that the Nigerian people like football ... here we have had wonderful matches and we have not always had the number of spectators these matches deserved."

He added air transport needed improving.

Brazil claimed before their quarter-final that it had taken

two days to get on a flight from Calabar to Lagos, and that the plane door was locked before the whole delegation was aboard, leaving an official stranded on the tarmac.

There have also some complaints about accommodation, with Japan coach Philippe Troussier saying that his squad had been placed in a hotel with mosquitos and "two hundred ladies going upstairs" after five in the evening.

Blatter reiterated the stadiums, pitches, training and medical facilities had all been good.

"FIFA vice-president Jack Warner said that LOC (the local organising committee)

has accomplished the eighth wonder of the world because he was here a year ago and he said it would never be ready in time," Blatter said.

Blatter said playing standards had been high and refereeing good.

FIFA director of communications Keith Cooper denied there had been little interest in a competition whose scheduling -- at a time when the European club season is reaching its climax -- had been widely criticised.

"Ninety-five countries have shown between four and 25 matches in full and 80 more have shown highlights," he said.